

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL'S THEORY OF TRAGEDY

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Bibliography.

References to Hebbel's works in the Werner edition.

W = Werke.
Br. = Briefe.
T = Tagebücher.

Particulars of other works quoted in the notes are contained in the Bibliography.

1. W IX 34²⁷. "Das Leben soll bei dem Künstler etwas anderes als die Leichenkammer, wo es aufgeputzt und beigelegt wird, finden."
2. T II 2946. "Diese Poeten kennen das eigentliche Lebenselement des Dramas gar nicht. Sie malen Bilder und wieder Bilder, dass die Bilder etwas bedeuten müssen, davon ahnen sie nichts."
3. T III 4875.
4. T IV 5541. "Wahrheit in Kunst und Poesie! Gewiss. Aber hoffentlich zum weinenden Auge doch nicht auch die fliessende Nase!"

& s. W I 410¹. "Zu grosse Treue stört die Illusion."
5. W VI 349.
6. T III 4404.

FRIEDRICH HEBBEL'S THEORY OF TRAGEDY.

Hebbel's General Ideas about the Nature of Art and in particular of Drama.

Already in the early (1835) essay on "Körner and Kleist" Hebbel had insisted that art, and in particular drama, is not concerned with the imitation of nature in the sense of the external world and its happenings.¹ He had nothing but scorn for dramas concerned with such imitation of nature. The writers of such "naturalistic" dramas ignore the real vital element of drama. They paint pictures but have no idea that these pictures must have some significance, some meaning.² For Hebbel, Iffland's works were typical of this style of writing, and Hebbel notes in his diary for 1851³ that when one had just seen a play after Iffland's manner and then stepped out on to the street or went into a tavern, one had the impression that the play was still in progress.

(Bertholdt Auerbach is similarly ridiculed in the diary⁴ for his conception of "truth" in art; there are limits to realism in art, in Hebbel's view.)

The epigram on the "Principle of the imitation of Nature"⁵ goes back to a diary entry of 1848,⁶ in which Hebbel/

1. W XI 240¹⁵. "Die wirkliche Sprache des Helden hat im Roman und überhaupt in der Dichtung nicht mehr zu tun, wie sein wirklicher Stiefel im Gemälde. Das ganz ordinäre Natürlichkeitsprinzip --- steht im entschiedensten Widerspruch mit der Kunst, und muss völlig überwunden sein, ehe von Kunst überhaupt nur die Rede sein kann. Wo es sich um ein Kunstwerk handelt, sind alle Mittel der Art von vornherein ausgeschlossen."

& s. T IV 5996,
T III 4276 and
W XI 36²⁹.

2. T IV XXIV⁷. "Dass der Moder nicht zum wirklichen Blatt und Keim, der Musiker nicht vom Ton zum Wort zurück kann, weiss jeder; ebensowenig der Dichter zur Wirklichkeit."

3. T IV XXVI.

4. W IX 34²⁴. "Die Kunst soll das Leben in allen seinen verschiedenartigen Gestaltungen ergreifen und darstellen."

& s. W XI 70¹⁶.

5. W XI 3⁷. "Die Kunst hat es mit dem Leben, dem inneren und Äusseren zu tun ---- Die Hauptgattungen der Kunst und ihre Gesetze ergeben sich unmittelbar aus der Verschiedenheit der Elemente, die sie im jedesmaligen Fall aus dem Leben herausnimmt und verarbeitet."

6. W XI 4²¹ & 7¹⁸.

Hebbel states that man cannot equal but only outdo nature; he stands either above or below her. In the same year Hebbel¹ declares the principle of "naturalism" to be in complete contradiction to art, adding that it must be overcome before one can even begin to speak of art. By forming their judgements in accordance with this principle,² critics such as Julian Schmidt could contrive to make even Shakespeare's works seem ridiculous.³

But although it does not imitate nature, art does reflect life - as the Körner and Kleist essay had already expressed it - in all its various forms.⁴ Now, in 1843, in "Mein Wort über das Drama", Hebbel derives the chief types of art and their laws directly from the difference of the elements which in each case they take from life and employ.⁵ Drama, in particular, is concerned with life, but not with the individual life of real or imagined characters. Hebbel was not content with creation of character as the aim of drama.⁶ Since the "Sturm und Drang" period, many had seen in "character-drama" their aim, and in Shakespeare, whom they admired as the great creator of character, their model. Hebbel, in his conception of plot as of supreme importance in drama, is/

1. X XI 3²¹. "Das Drama stellt den Lebensprozess an sich dar."
2. W XI 3¹². "Das Leben erscheint in zwiefacher Gestalt, als Sein und als Werden, und die Kunst löst ihre Aufgabe am vollkommensten, wenn sie sich zwischen Beiden gemessen in der Schwebe erhält. --- Nur so wird sie, was sie werden soll, Leben im Leben."
3. L. Abercrombie. "Principles of Literary Criticism", p. 98.
4. W XI 3⁷.
5. L. Abercrombie. P. 99^u.
6. W XI 9¹³. "Ich will nur den weitverbreiteten Wahn, als ob der Dichter etwas anderes geben könne, als sich selbst, als seinen eignen Lebensprozess, bestreiten."

is nearer to Aristotle. But it is a particular kind of plot which Hebbel demands, one which portrays what he calls the "process of life"¹ and thus becomes "life within life"² as it were a play within a play. This conception of drama is very like Aristotle's "imitation of an action", which Lascelles Abercrombie³ interprets as signifying "something happening --- by means of, and in the being of, agents --- these agents being human beings". The action is thus "a process of events embodied in the lives and wills of human beings". Hebbel speaks of "inner and outer life"⁴, that is, psychological and external action - conceptions to which the categories of Abercrombie's exposition correspond.

The "story about human beings" must, however, to satisfy Hebbel, be of a particular kind. It must illustrate his philosophy of life. Tragedy imitates, as Abercrombie writes,⁵ not life, but a conception of life. For Hebbel, it must symbolise a metaphysical idea about the essential nature of existence, it must imitate his idea of life. In Hebbel's opinion it is self-evident that the poet can give nothing which is not a part of himself, which does not belong to his own life-process⁶. And it is the privilege of higher/

1. T III 3666. "Es ist der Vorzug höherer Naturen, dass sie die Welt mit allen ihren Einzelheiten immer symbolisch sehen."
2. Charles Morgan, p.423.
3. T IV 5788. "Der erste Akt der Kunst ist die vollständige Negation der realen Welt, in dem Sinne nämlich, dass sie sich vor der jetzt zufällig vorhandenen Erscheinungsreihe, worin das Universum hervortritt, trennt und auf den Urgrund, aus dem sich eine ganz andere Kette hervorspinnen kann, wie sie sich historisch nachweisbar schon daraus hervorgesponnen hat, zurückgeht."
4. T IV 6107. "Das poetische Drama kann garnicht existieren, ohne mit dieser Welt zu brechen und eine andere dafür aufzubauen."

higher natures, that is of the true poets, that they see the world and all its details always "symbolically".¹ It is their conception of life in terms of outward existence which the poets give when they portray "life in life". Morgan, in an essay on the "Nature of Dramatic Illusion", writes: "All that art can do in the way of imitation of a given natural subject is, first, to negative a spectator's own preconceptions of that subject so that he lies open to imaginative acceptance of a different view, and, secondly, to impregnate him with this fresh, this alien understanding. Illusion is the impregnating force".² Hebbel's parallel to this is in the diary for 1860³: "The first act of art is the complete negation of the world of reality in the sense of a separation from the chance series of phenomena in which the universal appears, and a return to the originals, out of which quite another chain of events could be spun from the one historically exemplified." The common theatrical piece is concerned with the imitation of nature, but "poetic drama cannot exist at all without breaking with this world and building up a new world of its own".⁴ This new world is based on the writer's conception of life and symbolises his ideas about the nature/

1. T IV 5841¹³. "Religion und Poesie haben einen gemeinschaftlichen Ursprung und einen gemeinschaftlichen Zweck."
2. T IV XXVI. "Dass der religiöse Ursprung des Dramas nicht zufällig ist."
3. T IV 5841²⁰ & 5966.
4. T II 2755. "Lear ist das einzige Werk, das mit der Antigone verglichen werden kann, indem es die sittlichen Wurzeln des Lebens --- bloss legt, wie jene."
5. T II 3231. " --- aus dem grossen Fortbildungsprozess der Menschheit heraus eine neue Welt zu gestalten."
6. T II 2393. "Unsere Tragödie hat sich schon so weit ins Individuelle zurückgezogen, dass dies letztere, welches eigentlicher Stoff der Komödie sein sollte, für sie nicht mehr da ist."
- & s. W VI 358. "Die moderne Komödie."
7. T I 1207. "Man nehme das Komische woher man wolle, nur nicht aus der Natur und ihren grossen Verhältnissen."
8. W X 383⁴. "Das Komische, ebenweil es stofflich nichts ist, verlangt die grösste Vollendung der Form."

nature of existence. Art is thus for Hebel on a level with, and as important as, religion. Both have the same origin and the same aim,¹ wrote Hebbel in 1860 to Pastor Luck. The origin of drama in religion is no chance one,² and religion and philosophy both find their most perfect expression in art.³ "Antigone" is for Hebbel, as for Hegel, the supreme tragedy, and "Lear" alone ranks in Hebbel's view with it, for in both works the "ethical roots of life are laid bare".⁴ It is through art that out of the great process of the development of humanity the new ethical world is formed.⁵

What marks off tragedy from comedy, in Hebbel's view, is that tragedy is concerned with a serious story, with terrible events; here also there is a parallel in Aristotle's definition. For Hebbel, the subject of tragedy must have cosmic significance, whereas comedy deals with the individual.⁶ The material of comedy must be lighter, its range of subject is narrower.⁷ "In theme it is void, and it must therefore be perfect in form."⁸ The difference between the tragic and the comic lies, in Hebbel's view, in the possible implications of the theme treated; he is less concerned with the comic itself than with the significance/

1. T I 99. "Das Komische ist die beständige
Negation der Natur."
& s. T I 103.
2. Whitehead, pp. 12^u & 13^m.
3. T II 2721. "Das Leben ist eine furchtbare Not-
wendigkeit, die auf Treu und
Glauben angenommen werden muss, die
aber keiner begreift, und die
tragische Kunst, die, indem sie das
individuelle Leben der Idee
gegenüber vernichtet, sich zug-
leich darüber erhebt, ist der
leuchtendste Blitz des menschlichen
Bewusstseins, der aber freilich
nichts erhellen kann, was er nicht
zugleich verzehrte."

significance of comedy, which he appeared to measure by the standards which he applied to tragedy. For him, comedy is the negation of nature¹ and in consequence can have no cosmic significance and is incapable of expressing Hebbel's conception of life. Hebbel's conception of the comic is curiously lacking in what is ordinarily termed a sense of humour; he takes comedy seriously, and in this resembles his own comic characters, as will be seen in the section dealing with comedy in particular.

In Hebbel's view, then, tragedy is rooted in nature and reflects the course of nature. Similarly, Whitehead, in "Science and the modern world", compares the Greek tragedians' view of fate with the vision possessed by modern science. "Fate in Greek tragedy becomes the order of nature in modern thought --- . The essence of dramatic tragedy is not unhappiness. It resides in the solemnity of the remorseless working of things. This inevitableness of destiny can only be illustrated in terms of human life by incidents which in fact involve unhappiness."² So it is with Hebbel's tragedy. Its essence is the process of life, and life is "a terrible necessity which must be accepted on trust but which none understands".³

1. T III 3877.

2. W II 379³². "Die Komödie verträgt sich nicht mit Wunden und Blut, und die Tragödie kann das Barocke nicht in sich aufnehmen. Da stellt sich Tragikomödie ein, denn eine solche ergibt sich überall, wo ein tragisches Geschick in untragischer Form auftritt, wo auf der einen Seite wohl der kämpfende und untergehende Mensch, auf der anderen jedoch nicht die berechnete sittliche Macht, sondern ein Sumpf von faulen Verhältnissen vorhanden ist."

3. W II 380⁷.

"Da bleibt dem Künstler, der sich nicht begnügen will, die Rosen und Lilien auf dem Felde zu malen, nichts übrig, als zu der Form der Tragiködie zu greifen. Dass diese Form keine reine ist, wird er darum nicht vergessen."

On intermediate forms such as that of tragi-comedy Hebbel says little. Bamberg¹ had suggested the title to him for his "Trauerspiel in Sizilien", but Hebbel's exposition of a tragi-Comedy is unsatisfying. Comedy, according to him, is not compatible with "wounds and blood", with the "terrible", and tragedy cannot absorb the baroque². Here, in the "Trauerspiel", the subject is not the individual alone, but his relation to his surroundings, and yet it is no tragedy, for interests have taken the place of convictions, making any cosmic signification of the subject impossible.³ Altogether, even Hebbel seems to indicate that the form is not a true one but at best a "pis aller".

1. T II 726.

2. W IX 39¹⁵. "Dasjenige, was eine Tragödie zur Tragödie macht, liegt nur im Kampfe des Menschen, nie aber im Ausgange dieses Kampfes."

3. W X 374⁸. "Den Grundbegriff der neueren Tragödie finde ich in dem herben Gebundensein des höchsten Adels menschlicher Natur in Leid und Tod, und in dem dadurch bedingten, ja als notwendig vorausgesetzten Widerstand der Welt gegen das Grosse in seinem Werdedrang."

4. W XI 32¹. "Das Drama stellt den Lebensprozess an sich dar, --- in dem Sinne, dass es uns das bedenkliche Verhältnis vergegenwärtigt, worin das aus dem ursprünglichen Nexus entlassene Individuum dem Ganzen, dessen Teil er trotz seiner unbegreiflichen Freiheit noch immer geblieben ist, gegenübersteht."

& s. Br. I 140¹⁶. "Ein Teil des Lebens ist Ufer (Gott und Natur) ein anderes (Mensch und Menschheit) ist Strom. Wo und wie spiegeln sie sich, tranken und durchdringen sie sich gegenseitig? Dies scheint mir die grosse Frage von Anbeginn, die dem Dichter der Genius vorlegt."

T R A G E D Y.

The Nature of the Tragic Conflict.

Tragedy, then, like all high art, illustrates a metaphysical idea. For Hebbel, all art demands a "timeless element".¹ Tragedy in particular illustrates for him the idea of the necessary conflict into which every notable individual comes with his surroundings, whether with other men or with the circumstances of his time. The conflict of man is what characterises the work of tragic poets², and Hebbel finds the essence of modern tragedy in the fact that "the highest in human nature is inevitably involved in suffering and death, and that this limitation in man evokes the opposition, thereby entailed and indeed presupposed as necessary, of the world towards greatness in its impulse towards development".³ Tragic works are concerned with the critical relation in which the notable individual (one which has quitted his original sphere) stands in respect to the whole, of which in spite of his unaccountable freedom he still forms a part.⁴ The relation is one upon which conflict inevitably follows; for to Hebbel life as/

1. W XI 4⁴. " --- das Leben als Vereinzelung,
das nicht masszuhalten weiss."
2. W XI 4³⁰ f. "Nur dadurch wird das Drama lebendig,
--- dass es uns veranschaulicht,
wie das Individuum im Kampf
zwischen seinem persönlichen und
dem allgemeinen Weltwillen ---
seine Form und seinen Schwerpunkt
gewinnt, und dass es uns so die
Natur alles menschlichen Handelns
klarmacht."

& s. Zinkernagel (3). "Das aufdämmernde tiefe
Erkenntnis des Gegensatzes zwischen
Weltwillen und Einzelwillen,
zwischen Individualität und Not-
wendigkeit, der sich im Schicksals-
gedanken symbolisiert, ist die
Wurzel, die in der Kunst des Dramas
ihre herrliche Blüte treibt."

3. G. Brychan Rees. "Fr. Hebbel as a dramatic
critic." P. 44 F.

4. s. T II 2881. "Es gibt nur eine Notwendigkeit,
die, dass die Welt bestehe, wie es
aber den Individuen darin ergeht,
ist gleichgültig."

5. T I 1341. "Wir sind nur dadurch, dass wir uns
behaupten."

- 6 5. T II 2335. "Das höchste Lebensgesetz für Staaten
und Individuen ist das Gesetz,
sich zu behaupten."

as individuation cannot keep within its bounds,¹ and human nature remaining in all circumstances the same, the conflict follows necessarily upon the fact of individuation. On the one hand there is the individual, on the other the general will, and tragic plays deal with the conflicts of these two wills as they are represented in the characters.²

For Hebbel it is a self-evident fact that such a conflict is necessary in life. This is his "pan-tragic" view of life; individual existence for him necessarily implies conflict with the general will and is in consequence doomed to destruction. Rees³ calls this problem of individuation the problem with which Hebbel was always occupied; life itself is the problem to be solved. "The tragic in life", he writes, "lies in our struggle against --- necessity"⁴ and tragedy shows this struggle taking place". And life itself is this struggle of the individual against the universe. Life to Hebbel means action in the sense of self-assertion, resistance to obstacles and limitations.⁵ The highest law of life for states and for individuals is that of self-preservation,⁶ which necessarily takes the form of self-assertion. We must love ourselves, even if this involves hating that/
that/

1. T II 2099. "Ach, es ist schändlich genug, dass wir uns --- selbst lieben müssen, obgleich dies bedingt, dass wir das Bessere hassen müssen."
2. T II 2664. "Das Leben ist der grosse Strom, die Individualitäten sind Tropfen, die tragischen aber Eisstücke, die wieder zerschmolzen werden müssen, und sich, damit dies möglich sei, an einander abreissen und zerstossen."
3. Br. I 89¹². "Ins Unermessliche verschweben.
Das ist kein Trost für all die Leere.
Der Tropfe muss als Tropfe leben.
Im Meer schwimmt er mit dem Meere:
Du kannst die Grenzen nicht erweitern,
Die dich zum Ich zusemmendrängen,
Verschütten heisst's den Trauk, nicht
läutern,
Die zwängende Retort sprengen!"
a/
n/

& s. W VII 141.

4. T II 2440. "Was wir Leben nennen, das ist die Vermessenheit eines Teils dem Ganzen gegenüber."
5. T II 2129. "Alles Leben ist Kampf des Individuellen mit dem Universum."
6. T II 2262. "Leben ist der Versuch des trotziger-widerspenstigen Teils, sich vom Ganzen loszureissen und für sich zu existieren, ein Versuch, der so lange glückt, als die dem Ganzen durch die individuelle Absonderung geraubte Kraft ausreicht."

& s. T II 2613. "Leben heisst parteiisch sein."

that which is better than ourselves.¹ Universal life, as Hebbel puts it, is a great river, the individuals are drops, the tragic ones lumps of ice, which must be broken up.² But this entails their destruction as individuals, for the drop must live as a drop or not at all.³ (The verses of the last quotation contain, in Hebbel's view, "everything that can be said about art and life".) Hebbel is convinced that it is a moral necessity with which the individual is in conflict, but life entails partiality. "That which we call life is the presumptuousness of the part towards the whole".⁴ "All life is a struggle of the individual with the universe."⁵ "Life is the attempt of the rebellious part to separate itself from the 'whole' and attain particular existence. This attempt is so long successful as the power lasts of which through the individual's defection the whole is robbed."⁶ Hebbel, then, regards individual existence itself as an act of robbery on the resources of strength at the disposal of the universal will. If this is so, then it is true to say, as Hebbel does, that all art, in so far as it is concerned with individual life, deals with the conflict of the particular will with the universal, that/

1. T III 4414. "Die ganze dramatische Kunst hat es mit dem Unverstand und der Unsittlichkeit zu tun, denn was ist unverständiger und unsittlicher, als die Leidenschaft?"

2. T III 4176. "Wenn die Charaktere die sittliche Idee nicht verneinen, was hilft es, dass das Stück sie bejaht?"

3. s. T II 3063.

4. s. Zinkernagel (185). "Die Kunst ist ihm das Mittel, sich das Weltgesetz zu objectivieren."

that is, with moral necessity, and that consequently the individual will is intrinsically what Hebbel calls "contra-ethical".¹ What can be more unreasonable or (in Hebbel's sense) to a greater degree contra-ethical than individual passion? The characters of drama, in particular, by reason of their pronounced individuality, are contra-ethical in this sense;² and indeed the only truly "ethical" actions would be those which, being justified from the point of view of the Idea, transcend the individual, and are consequently unsuited to drama.³

Those who do not share this view of things in general, of the individual being necessarily at variance with the "universal", of the dualism underlying every manifestation of life, cannot accept his notion of tragedy, which is based on his conception of life.⁴

This view of life was evidently not uncommon in Hebbel's time and is a particular development of Romantic Idealism in philosophy. Schelling opposed Fichte and his followers by declaring that the Absolute had two forms, not only the Ego but also the Non-Ego, thus basing his whole system on the dualism of Nature and Spirit. Man he considered as representing the highest effort of Nature to reflect itself. In man there/

there was therefore the highest degree of opposition to the Non-Ego. Everywhere Schelling saw the struggle going on between the principles of generalisation and of individualisation; and in every manifestation, necessarily individual in character, he saw a defection from the Absolute. Schelling believed with Fichte in the autonomy of the will as the principle of all philosophy; and for Schelling there was, in the last resort, no other "being", or existence, than the will. Like Hebbel, too, he saw man as a middle point, embodying the conflict of the general with the individual. To Schelling, unity of the particular will with the universal will was "good", separation from it was "evil".

Hegel, too, saw a conflict going on continually between moral reason in its pure idea and its manifestation in human activity - a conflict which ended in the destruction of the exclusive character of the individual. On the one side Hegel saw the true, the Divine, and on the other the "arbitrary will of the disordered personality". Hegel's famous statement about the manifestation in the lives of great men of the "cunning of reason" setting the passions to work for its own ends, while that which develops its/

its existence through such impulsion suffers loss. - all this is founded on the recognition of the dualism of the general and the individual, the "objective spirit" and notable men. The conflict between the Idea and the individual is solved in the progress of events towards the realisation of the Idea, but only through the sacrifice of the individual whose will has been diverted to its own undoing. And the triadic structure of the whole "Phenomenology of the Spirit" is based on the conflict of the individual with the supra-individual, this antithesis of the subjective spirit (in psychology) and the objective spirit (in ethics) being resolved in the absolute spirit in art and philosophy. This absolute spirit is for Hegel the Idea returning from self-alienation to itself.

For Schopenhauer the will is the principle of all existence and underlies all reality; the world exists only in the mind of the individual. Schopenhauer here contrasts the life of the will with the life of so-called knowledge. The essence of the world is the senseless and purposeless will to live, which must be annihilated. Similar thoughts are to be found in von Hartmann's works. The Will, because with Reason it belongs to the Unconscious, has/

1. Fritz Strich: p. 357.

& s. Körner: "Tragik und Tragödie", p. 75.

2. Schlegel: s. Hasenclever, "Das Tragische", p. 55°.

has already given no object of will; it alone creates reality. Real existence (what von Hartmann calls the "That") is a-logical; ideal existence, however, (the "What") is logical. The aim of willing is to translate the Ideal into the Real, and as this attempt is foredoomed to failure, it thus comes about that there is a surplus of suffering in willing. The Will, therefore, when it has reached a state of complete enlightenment, tends always to make its aim non-existence and in this way to abolish suffering.

Fritz Strich¹ in "Deutsche Klassik und Romantik" contrasts the classical view of things which saw only the tragic case, when the beautiful was opposed by fate and though this opposition was raised to the region of the sublime, with the romantic view which knew not only the tragic case, but in which the world itself was "necessarily and incurably tragic". Here Strich refers to Friedrich Schlegel's distinction between esthetic and philosophical tragedy.² Esthetic tragedy is for Schlegel the completion of "beautiful" poetry, consisting of lyrical elements alone, and its final result is supreme harmony. Philosophical tragedy is on the other hand the highest art-form of didactic poetry, consists entirely of characteristic elements/

1. Kutscher (x). "Hebbel's Kritik fusst ganz auf der absoluten Philosophie und ist ohne diese undenkbar. --- Hebbel's Kritik ist nicht original, man kann nur von gewissen Erweiterungen und Vertiefungen sprechen."
(180) "Die gesamte Hebbel'sche Kritik und Aesthetik ist eine durch eine philosophische Natur vorgenommene Auswahl, Abrundung und gelegentliche Vertiefung von Problemen der Zeit."

2. Santayana. "The Last Puritan", 239^u f.

elements, and its final result is the highest disharmony. Schlegel goes on to describe the theory of philosophical tragedy as still completely unknown; he finds an example of it in Hamlet, in whose character he sees total lack of relation between the reflective and active powers; the whole impression of the tragedy is a "maximum of despair". The supreme impression is that of the "eternal, stupendous dissonance which for all time exists between mankind and fate". Such was the general view in Hebbel's time, and although he claimed independence of thought and resented suggestions of similarity between the systems of his contemporaries and his own ideas, it is impossible that he should not have been influenced by current thought.¹

The general conception in Hebbel's mind is that individuation entails lack of proportion, that every man worthy of his name is a disturbing and disruptive element in the universe, that reasonableness or compromise is something weak and despicable, that "there is nothing but life in this world", and that "life wouldn't be worth living if it weren't reckless and sinful".² This is an assumption, at the most a subjective view; some would see in it a particularly "German"/

"German" characteristic. At least, Hebbel adopted it, and both his nature and circumstances fostered it. His childhood had shown him that life itself had to be bought at the price of a bitter struggle; from his experiences at the hands of the parish clerk, Mohr, who did nothing to forward what he must have realised was a very gifted lad, but rather treated his assistant as a servant whose talents outside the sphere of his service were of no interest to his employer, he learned that intellectual and moral superiority did not triumph without effort. Perhaps in particular Hebbel's relations in Hamburg with Amalie Schoppe brought home to him that the development of the individual brings with it a change in its relations to its surroundings. Hebbel did not forget the fact of his indebtedness to his patroness for his introduction into the world of letters, but would not pay her the reward, which she claimed, of subservience; that would have been to acknowledge a system which he had outgrown. Hebbel's relations to Elise Lensing are to be understood from his own words, that it was the "duty of the individual to cast aside everything, even a creature who loved it, which impeded its development". And Hebbel's disagreements in Vienna with/

1. s. Hasenclever, p. 78°.

2. W XI 4⁴. Das Drama wiederholt die "ewige Wahrheit, dass das Leben als Vereinzelung --- die Schuld nicht bloss zufällig erzeugt, sondern sie notwendig und wesentlich mit einschliesst und bedingt --- und dass der Mensch --- seiner Natur und seinem Geschick nach ewig derselbe bleibt. --- Die dramatische Schuld entspringt nicht, wie die christliche Erbsünde, erst aus der Richtung des menschlichen Willens, sondern unmittelbar aus dem Willen selbst, aus der starren eigenmächtigen Ausdehnung des Ichs."

& W XI 29²⁴. "In der Masslosigkeit liegt die Schuld. --- Diese Schuld ist eine uranfängliche, von dem Begriff des Menschen nicht zu trennende --- sie ist mit dem Leben selbst gesetzt. --- Sie hängt von der Richtung des menschlichen Willens nicht ab, sie begleitet alles menschliche Handeln, wir mögen uns dem Guten oder dem Bösen zuwenden, das Mass können wir dort überschreiten, wie hier."

with Gutzkow and Laube and with many of his personal friends may be traced to contempt for compromise in any form and his disregard for social conventions in the matter of the expression of his personal opinions.

In the ordinary view, the lack of proportion, which characterises every individual in its relation to the whole, is ethically wrong; and it certainly involves suffering. Hebbel and these philosophers of his own and the next generation reject the ordinary view as regards the "guilt" attached to actions resulting out of the development of the personality. Such "guilt" has nothing to do with sin, but is rather an honour, a privilege. In Hegel's words,¹ it is the "privilege of great characters to be guilty". And this was Hebbel's view of things too; it is the natural outcome of his "pan-tragic" view of life. As life can manifest itself only in the conflict between the individual and the general, so the lack of proportion in the individual is the form in which its separate existence expresses itself, and is justifiable.² This kind of guilt is the direct outcome of the expansion implicit in Hebbel's conception of individuality, and this expansion is what the philosophers of the period termed "will" and regarded/

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direct outcome of the expansion implicit in Hegel's
conception of individuality, and this expansion is
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regarded

regarded as metaphysically necessary. It follows that it is justified and not ethically wrong. In 1844¹ Hebbel notes that his conception of guilt is exactly that of Hegel in the "Philosophy of Right", and regrets not having known this work at the time of his writing the reply to Heiberg's attack the year before. Hebbel had, however, read the "Esthetics" in 1842-3 in Copenhagen and the "Phenomenology" in Munich.

Whether or not ethically wrong, this lack of proportion characterising the individual does certainly involve suffering. To Hebbel, this is an additional factor in support of his pan-tragic conception of life, for he considers that to be great one must suffer; he makes here an appeal to pride. The greatness of the individual is measured in Hebbel's view by the degree of opposition in which he stands to his surroundings. Hebbel finds consolation for the fact of suffering in the view that it is a necessary means to greatness and that it is only through great men that the world can progress.

This notion is perhaps not as new as it might seem. The conception of the "Idea" and its necessary advance consoling men for their sufferings is surely a development/

1. Franz. "Forschungen und Fortschritte, No. 27,
20.9.35.

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development of earlier Christian ideas of the holiness of suffering and the existence of an ordering Providence.

The "Idea" takes the place of Providence; like it, the Idea works through individuals, for their ultimate good, and these individuals must pass through a period of present suffering. Dr Erich Franz¹ has indicated interesting parallels between the tenets of Protestantism and the fundamental conceptions of Idealism in Germany regarding art and philosophy, drawing attention to the significant fact that almost all the poets and thinkers of Idealism in Germany were of Protestant origin. And in the case of Hegel he particularly notes in his theory of the "cunning of reason" in making use of the nature of great men for its own ends a development of the protestant doctrine of Predestination; he also calls Hegel's postulate of the reasonableness of all reality the secular form of the protestant creed of Providence.

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1. Hasenclever, pp. 65-92. From Hegel's "Esthetics".

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TRAGIC GUILT.

So far, what has been indicated has been as it were the philosophical climate in which Hebbel's ideas on tragedy grew. Before dealing with these ideas in particular, one may note that the general idealistic position, occupied by Hebbel's contemporaries and successors who have been mentioned, led to very similar notions about tragedy.

Hegel's idea of tragedy¹ is built up on the conception of the conflict between the Absolute and its manifestation in the world of reality. The "Divine", he writes, is the original theme of tragedy, not the Divine in itself but as it appears in the world of individual activity. He calls this the "Ethical", the Divine in its temporal reality, the content of human activity. Everything in the world of reality is, however, subject to the law of particularisation; in tragedy the ethical powers are individualised in the form of the wills of the characters and thus come into opposition with each other, for individual will takes the form of action and action involves reaction. The tragic lies for Hegel in the fact that in such conflicts both sides, taken individually, are/

1. s. Hegel VIII. "Philosophie des Rechtes",
p. 197-8, note.

2. Hasenclever, pp. 61-64. From Schelling's
"Philosophie der Kunst".

are in the right, while on the other hand they can develop the positive content of their own will only through opposition and injury to that of the other equally justified agent and thus in and through their ethical worth are involved in what Hegel calls "guilt".¹ In Hegel's view the Divine, the ethical "Substance", has a tendency towards the expression of itself in the world of reality, that is, through individual wills, and this expression involves irreconcilable conflict between the particularised aspects. The heroes of tragedy - Hegel is speaking of classical Greek tragedy - are at once guilty and guiltless. They have no choice; their actions are a result of their character, their "Pathos". The strength of great characters lies for Hegel in the fact that they do not choose a certain line of action but that the sum of their actions and being forms one whole; character, will and aim form a unity. It is thus the privilege of great characters to be "guilty"; it is their ethically justified "Pathos" which drives them to action, and in action lies their "guilt". Schelling² also sees the supreme tragedy, the greatest misfortune, in the fate of a man such as Oedipus (Hegel too cites this example) who without "ethical" guilt/

1. Hasenclever, pp. 110-118. From Schopenhauer's "Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung".
2. Hasenclever, pp. 118-124. From von Hartmann's "Studien und Aufsätze".

guilt, through destiny is inevitably involved in guilt.

Schopenhauer¹ finds the content of tragedy in the "conflict of the will with itself" and sees the tragic hero atoning for the "guilt of existence" itself. The highest type of tragedy for him is one brought about through the action, justified in itself, of the characters. Schopenhauer's conclusion is, however, unlike Hegel's - and Hebbel's - for he sees the aim of tragedy in the admonition to the individual to resignation and the negation of the will to live. There is no privilege here in the fact of tragic guilt; the hero is merely typical of humanity which must learn through suffering to turn from life.

Von Hartmann² presupposes an irreconcilable conflict as an essential of tragedy. The tragic conclusion must be a necessary result not only of the conflict but of the characters themselves; von Hartmann sees predestined suffering inherent in the hero's character which causes him to act in a certain way. This activity partakes inevitably of the nature of partiality, whether it is ethically justifiable or not, and partiality contrasts with the "harmony of the spiritual spheres of life". Von Hartmann notes that the conception of "guilt" is too narrow/

1. Br. II 143²⁶ & Br. II 278¹⁸.

2. T. I 465.

the "conflict of the will with itself" and sees the tragic hero striving for the "unity of existence". The highest type of tragedy for him is one brought about through the action, justified in itself, of the characters. Schopenhauer's conclusion is, however, unlike Hegel's - and Hebbel's - for he sees the aim of tragedy in the admission to the individual to resignation and the negation of the will to live. There is no privilege here in the fact of tragic guilt; the hero is merely typical of humanity which must learn through suffering to turn from life. Von Hartmann presupposes an irreconcilable conflict as an essential of tragedy. The tragic condition must be a necessary result not only of the conflict but of the characters themselves; von Hartmann sees predestined suffering inherent in the hero's character which causes him to act in a certain way. This activity produces inevitably of the nature of partiality, whether it is ethically justifiable or not, and partiality contrasts with the "harmony of the spiritual spheres of life". Von Hartmann notes that the conception of "guilt" is too

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narrow to be used to describe this activity, for "guilt" refers only to the connection between the conflict and the catastrophe, whereas he wishes to define the relation between character and conflict. His conclusion is, like Schopenhauer's, that life is not the highest gift; the tragic hero recognises the necessity of evil in life and deduces from it the folly of all effort in the pursuit of happiness.

All these philosophers, then, base their ideas on tragedy on the conception of an irreconcilable conflict between the universal and the individual will, and all recognise in individual activity - the outcome of character - at the same time justification for the individual and also, through the individual and consequently "partial" nature of the activity, tragic guilt. Hebbel claims independence of thought, but Hegel's view in the "Esthetics" was certainly known to him during his stay in Copenhagen in 1842-3,¹ and earlier, in Munich, he had heard Schelling's lectures² and had studied his works and also Hegel's "Phenomenology". His main essays of 1843 and 1844 certainly show Hegelian influence.

Hebbel's mature view of tragic conflict and guilt is to be found mainly in "Mein Wort über das Drama"/

1. W XI 3²¹ ff. "Das Drama stellt das Lebensprozess selbst dar. Und zwar nicht bloss in dem Sinne, dass es uns das Leben in seiner ganzen Breite vorführt, was die epische Dichtung sich ja wohl auch zu tun erlaubt, sondern in dem Sinne, dass es uns ^{das} bedenkliche Verhältnis vergegenwärtigt, worin das aus dem ursprünglichen Nexus entlassene Individuum dem Ganzen, dessen Teil es trotz seiner unbegreiflichen Freiheit noch immer geblieben ist, gegenübersteht. Das Drama ist demnach, wie es sich für die höchste Kunstform schicken will, auf gleiche Weise ans Seiende wie ans Werden verwiesen: ans Seiende, indem es nicht müde werden darf, die ewige Wahrheit zu wiederholen, dass das Leben als Vereinzelung, die nicht masszuhalten weiss, die Schuld nicht bloss zufällig erzeugt, sondern sie notwendig und wesentlich mit einschliesst und bedingt; ans Werden, indem es an immer neuen Stoffen, wie die wandelnde Zeit und ihr Niederschlag, die Geschichte, sie ihm entgegenbringt, dazutun hat, dass der Mensch, wie die Dinge um ihn her sich auch verändern mögen, seiner Natur und seinem Geschick nach ewig derselbe bleibt. Hierbei ist nicht zu übersehen, dass die dramatische Schuld nicht, wie die christliche Erbsünde, erst aus der Richtung des menschlichen Willens entspringt, sondern unmittelbar aus dem Willen selbst, aus der starren, eigenmächtigen Ausdehnung des Ichs, und dass es daher dramatisch völlig gleichgültig ist, ob der Held an einer vortrefflichen oder einer verwerflichen Bestrebung scheitert."

Drama", where he writes:¹ "Drama portrays the actual process of life, not in the sense that it displays before us life in its whole extent, as epic poetry can, but by bringing home to us the critical relation in which the individual which has quitted its original sphere stands to the whole, of which in spite of its unaccountable freedom it still remains a part. Drama, then, as befits the highest form of art, is concerned with Being and with Becoming - with Being by constantly repeating the eternal truth that life, as a process of individualisation which can set itself no limits, not merely occasionally engenders guilt but necessarily and inevitably includes and involves it; with Becoming through demonstrating by constant fresh examples afforded by the passage of time and its precipitate, history, that man, however his surroundings may change, in his nature and his destiny remains always the same. In this connection it must be borne in mind that dramatic guilt, unlike the original sin of Christian doctrine, does not result from the direction of the will but directly from the will itself, from the stubborn, arbitrary expansion of the Ego, and that dramatically, therefore, it makes no difference whether the hero succumbs in a noble or a base/

ent /

base endeavour."

Drama portrays the process of life by making clear to us the relation of the individual to the whole. This is the metaphysical foundation of tragedy, following from Hebbel's general philosophy already outlined. To Hebbel, individual life took the form of necessary conflict between the notable individual and the whole, and tragedy showed this conflict taking place.

"Drama is thus concerned with Being and with Becoming." Hebbel here draws a distinction between the world of Being - the ideal, invisible realm of truths and values, of Platonic "Ideas" - and the world of Becoming, the concrete realities of life, in a state of constant change and development. Hebbel contrasts the timeless (the "eternal truth" that individual existence entails guilt) with the world of time, of history. Tragedy illustrates the "timeless" truth of the necessary "lack-of-proportion" inherent in all individual life - this "truth" has been discussed above and found to be a subjective interpretation of life made by Hebbel and corresponding to the view held by the German idealistic philosophers - and it illustrates this truth by means of incidents taken from/

from real life, from the "Becoming", the history of events which have "taken place". *and are taking place.*

"Dramatic guilt springs from the will itself."

The usual view is that men involve themselves in suffering through acting wrongly or unwisely, through the fact of their will being exerted in a wrong direction. What follows this action is thus to some extent at least their own fault, and they bear some kind of guilt. This was Aristotle's view, and he expressed it by saying that the typical tragic hero is one who falls not through vice or depravity but as a result of some great "hamartia", some error of judgement. The tragic hero is neither a completely bad nor a perfect man but a good man with some flaw in his life or character.

But this is not Hebbel's view: in tragedy of the metaphysical type written by Hebbel, the guilt is not personal, although it is individual in the sense of being the result of the process of individuation. However the tragic hero directs his will, whether for "good" or for "evil", by the mere fact of willing, that is, by being vigorously alive, he comes into necessary conflict with his surroundings. The conflict being inevitable, the notion of "guilt" in the usual/

1. T II 2578. "Die Helden stürzen, weil sie sich überheben --- Wozu diese Ueberhebung? Wozu dieser Fluch der Kraft? --- Warum diese aufsteigende Linie, die jeden höheren Grad mit so unsäglichen Schmerzen erkaufen muss?"
2. T II 3158. "Es hängt nicht weniger, als alles davon ab, dass der Begriff der Schuld richtig gefasst und nicht, --- mit dem untergeordneten der Sünde --- verwechselt werde, denn--- der Begriff der tragischen Schuld darf nur aus dem Leben selbst, aus der ursprünglichen Inkongruenz zwischen Idee und Erscheinung, die sich in der letzteren eben als Masslosigkeit, der natürlichen Folge des Selbsterhaltung und Behauptungstreibes, des ersten und berechtigten von allen, äussert, entwickelt werden."
- & s. T III 3851. "Der einzelne kann sich der Welt gar nicht gegenüberstellen, ohne sein kleines Recht in ein grosses Unrecht zu verwandeln."
3. s Zickel (39). Hebbel "löst die Freiheit in die Schuld auf, nicht umgekehrt die Schuld in die Freiheit."
4. s. W XI 427-440.

usual sense of ethical wrong is out of place. It is the conflict itself that matters, whether brought about by an action which in the eyes of ordinary men is "noble" or "base". "The heroes of tragedy fall because they rise above their sphere;"¹ Hebbel calls this the "curse of power", not of moral superiority. Everything depends, he writes, on his conception of guilt being rightly understood; and he goes on to say that tragic guilt arises out of life itself.²

There is something paradoxical therefore in Hebbel's view; his "guilt" is not in the ordinary sense guilt at all.³ His view, expressed in "Ein Wort über das Drama", subsequently published as the first part of "Mein Wort über das Drama", was at once contested by the Danish critic Heiberg.⁴ Heiberg accuses Hebbel of taking "life", which he rightly considers as the theme of art, in a purely abstract sense, without reference to anything behind the conception of the individual existence; this entails leaving the nature of the "Ideals" that inspire the dramatischers altogether out of account. To this error Heiberg attributes the "absurd" result drawn by Hebbel, namely that dramatically it makes no difference whether the hero succumbs in a noble or a base endeavour. Heiberg's statements/

*a reference to
Agnes Bernauer
might be
helpful*

1. W XI 436¹⁰-437¹⁵. Translation (probably by P.L. Moeller) of Heiberg's attack (in his *Intelligensblatt*) on Hebbel's "Ein Wort über das Drama", which Moeller had published in Denmark in his "Faedrelandet" No. 1261.

"Er (Hebbel) hat das Leben in abstracter Bedeutung genommen und steht in dem Ganzen gleichsam auf einem abstracten Standpunct. Denn wie könnte er sonst --- zu dem absurden Resultat kommen, dass es in dramatischer Hinsicht vollkommen gleichgültig sey, ob der Held an einer vortrefflichen oder einer verwerflichen Bestrebung scheitere. Hierin scheint die abstracte Anschauung deutlich ausgedrückt zu seyn. Es ist also wirklich bloss das individuelle Leben, welches Aufgabe der Kunst ist; es ist bloss der persönliche Held, für den uns interessiren sollen, aber nicht die Beschaffenheit der Idee, welche ihn erfüllt und ihn erst zum Helden zu machen vermag. --- Der Gedankengang (des Verfassers) scheint folgender zu seyn: das Drama stellt das Individuum dar, welches dem Ganzen gegenüber steht (?), wovon es doch ein Theil geblieben ist. Das ist/anderen Worten: es stellt die menschliche Freiheit dar. Auch diese steht dem Ganzen gegenüber (liger verfor?) worin der freie Wille bedingt ist, einschliesslich die allererste Schuld ohne Hinsicht auf des Willens übrige Beschaffenheit. Aber es ist ja offenbar, dass diese Stellung die Möglichkeit der Schuld einschliessen kann, aber keineswegs deren Notwendigkeit, ausgenommen so weit, als die Erbsünde in Betracht gezogen wird; diese aber will der Verf. gerade ausgeschlossen haben. --- Welches Chaos von verwirrten Begriffen! Aber die Verbindung, welche man zwischen dem Ausgangspunct und der Conclusion des Verfassers ausfinden kann, ist: dass da das Drama das Leben darstellt, also des freien Individuums Handlungen, so ist die Schuld darin bedingt; und da es bloss das Leben darstellt, aber nichts Anderes, so macht die begleitende Schuld die vortrefflichen und die verwerflichen Bestrebungen gleich, so dass deren eigentümlichen Natur dem Drama gleichgültig bleibt."

statements are far from clear: this is partly accounted for by the fact that they were translated by a Dane into German; but in addition to this, the thought itself is confused. Heiberg's meaning seems to be, however, that Hebbel is mainly concerned with the problem of human freedom. Whether man is free or not is a question that can only be answered if we know the nature of the "whole", the universe, and of man's place in it. It is clear that man is not necessarily involved in guilt simply because he is only a part of the universe. He may be or he may not - unless one accepts the Christian doctrine of original sin, and this doctrine Hebbel expressly excludes.

Heiberg goes on to describe Hebbel's utterances as a "chaos of confused conceptions" and interprets them as follows: "As drama portrays life, that is, the actions of free individuals, so guilt is necessarily involved therein. And as it portrays life alone, and nothing further, so the accompanying guilt renders the noble or base endeavours equal, so that the differences of their particular natures do not, for drama, exist."¹ Hebbel restates his case in his reply to Heiberg, which forms the second part of the essay "Mein Wort über das Drama", and formulates his opinions/

1. W XI 30⁷.
2. s. Hasenclever, p. 81⁰.
3. W XI 30³¹
4. W XI 31³.

the problem of human freedom. Whether man is free or not is a question that can only be answered if we know the nature of the "whole", the universe, and of man's place in it. It is clear that man is not necessarily involved in guilt simply because he is only a part of the universe. He may be or he may not - unless one accepts the Christian doctrine of original sin, and this doctrine Hebel expressly excludes.

The Hebel goes on to describe Hebel's utterances as a "phase of confused consciousness" and interprets them as follows: "As drama portrays life, that is, the actions of free individuals, so guilt is necessarily involved therein. And as it portrays life alone, and nothing further, so the accompanying guilt requires the noble or base endeavours equal, so that the difference of their particular nature do not, for drama, exist." Hebel weaves his name in his reply to Hebel, which forms the second part of the essay "Mein Wort über das Drama", and formulates his

opinions here even more forcibly than before, insisting that he is concerned not with a particular conception of "sin" in the Christian sense of wrong-doing but with "guilt", with the general conception of guilt in his own particular sense. He now repeats that dramatic guilt accompanies all human action, that the highest drama is concerned with it alone, and he adds that the most "moving" case is that in which the tragic hero suffers through a virtuous action.¹ Following the example of Hegel in the "Esthetics",² which he had read the year before, Hebbel now cites "Antigone" as the supreme tragedy,³ illustrating his point by referring to the theme as he interpreted it. "Antigone strives to carry out a sacred duty, consciously the duty imposed by kinship and affection towards her unburied brother, unconsciously the duty of reverence towards the gods; yet she succumbs, although she contravenes nothing but a law of civil society, untenable in itself and only formally representing the idea of the state." Hebbel concludes by asserting that either his statement (that the most moving case is that of a tragic hero suffering through a virtuous action) is an axiom, or "Antigone" is based on a triviality.⁴

Heiberg/

1. W XI 437¹³.

2. W XI 31¹⁰.

3. W XII 328²⁶.

4. W XII 328³¹.

"Das Drama ist nur darum die höchste Form der Kunst und die Tragödie wieder die höchste Form des Dramas, weil das Gesetz des Dramas dem Weltlauf selbst zugrunde liegt, und weil die Geschichte sich in allen grossen Krisen immer zur Tragödie zuspitzt. --- Es gibt keinen Moment, wo irgendein Recht sich durchsetzen könnte, ohne irgendein Unrecht zu begehen; --- was nun der Dramatiker wert ist, der für diesen Dualismus des Rechts keinen Sinn hat, weiss jeder."

5. W VI 445. Grenze der Kunst. "Himmel und Erde Geh'n dem Dichter zwar nicht in den Rahmen, Aber wohl das Gesetz, das sie beherrscht und bewegt."

& s. T III 4978.

5. W XI 368²⁶. "Das Drama beruht auf dem Gegensatz und schöpft aus diesem seine ganze Kraft."

Heiberg found Hebbel's unduly pessimistic and accused him of placing the aim of tragedy in a "dissonance", by leaving the guilt unresolved.¹ This leads Hebbel on to speak of the degree of "reconciliation" possible in tragedy,² where according to him the guilt is not left unresolved although the cause of the guilt remains unrevealed, and where the highest that can be attained is the satisfaction afforded to the Idea by the destruction of the individual. This belongs, however, to Hebbel's theory of "reconciliation", which will be discussed later.

Parallels to these views are to be found in Hebbel's later writings.³ In a review of Gervinus' "History of the Nineteenth Century", he writes of the "well-known fact that the more villains he needs, the less a dramatic poet is worth". Here Hebbel contrasts Shakespeare's treatment in 'Romeo and Juliet', in 'Hamlet' and in 'Lear' with that of lesser writers. The law of drama is founded in Hebbel's opinion on that of the course of events in the world, that is, on the law of action and reaction, of opposition.⁴ (Hebbel had already touched on these points in the essay on the "So-called Political Demonstrations at Theatrical Performances"⁵ and was to do so again in the "Literaturbriefe"/

1. W XIII 224²⁹. "--- das tragische Gesetz, das dem Weltlauf zugrunde liegt, wie seinen Spiegelbild, dem Drama."

2. W XII 329¹³.

3. Schiller. "Vom Erhabenen." s. "Über das Pathetische", Bd. XI, p. 272 f.

"Literaturbriefe" for 1859¹). Thus it is that the crises in history culminate in tragedy; both sides, in history as in tragedy, are "in the right".² It is undeniable, in Hebbel's view, that in the present world it is a man's noblest qualities which most stand in the way of his success; in tragedy the same truth holds good.

The conception of guilt is of central importance in Hebbel's theory of tragedy. There had been a hint of something like it in Schiller's "Ueber das Pathetische",³ but with quite a different philosophical background. Esthetic power, writes Schiller, is based not on the fact but on the possibility of a "good" action. This possibility is present in every forcible expression of freedom and will-power, and any such expression can therefore be the object of the poet's presentation. If only he possesses the power, it is immaterial to us whether the poet's hero be good or bad. Where the moral law threatens the individual will, the character gains, esthetically, by resisting it. In esthetic judgements we are concerned not with morality in itself but with freedom. Medea, for example, is esthetically although not ethically sublime, for she suffers in order to impose her/

1. W·XI 43¹⁵. "Der Mensch dieses Jahrhunderts will nicht --- neue und unerhörte Institutionen, er will nur ein besseres Fundament für die schon vorhandenen, er will, dass sie sich auf nichts, als auf Sittlichkeit und Notwendigkeit, die identisch sind, stützen. --- Dies ist nach meiner Ueberzeugung der welthistorische Prozess, der in unseren Tagen vor sich geht; die Philosophie hat ihn --- vorbereitet, und die Kunst --- soll ihn beendigen helfen."

2. T III 3833. "Mit der Sittlichkeit kann der Dichter sich niemals in Widerspruch befinden. --- Die Sittlichkeit ist das Weltgesetz selbst, wie es sich im Grenzensetzen zwischen dem Ganzen und der Einzelercheinung äussert; was tut der Künstler, was tut vor allem der dramatische Dichter anderes, als dass er diese Harmonie aufzeigt und sie an jedem Punkt, wo er sie gestört sieht, wiederherstellt."

3. Hallmann (13). "--- die tranzendente Annahme einer sinnvoll leitenden Macht im Weltgeschehen."

her own will. Here, with Schiller, the background is Kantian; tragedy shows the power of the will as a supra-human principle, and helps to prove the materialists wrong. Tragedy is concerned with the power alone, not with the direction of the will. With Hebbel, the background is Hegelian; tragedy proves necessity of conflict, given the fact of individuation, no matter how hard the hero may try to direct his will towards the "good". The implication is that a profound view of the case has shown the old morality to be out of date. Hebbel considers that the drama of his time should help to complete the universal historical process, for which philosophy has paved the way, identifying morality with necessity.¹ True morality, as Hebbel sees it, is the law of the world itself, as it finds expression in setting the boundary between the general and the individual phenomenon; the poet, above all the dramatic poet, discloses this harmony and where it has been troubled, restores it. Drama is always in agreement with true morality, though not with the conventions of the age.² Hallmann³ notes that Hebbel postulates the existence of a "reasonably governing power" guiding the events of the world; in Hebbel's view, this power governs not/

1. W.M. Dixon. "Tragedy", p.38.
& s. Allardyce Nicoll, "The Theory
of Drama", p.151.

2. Dixon, p.38.

not only according to "reason" but also according to the standards of what he called "true morality".

This new view of guilt was influenced then by many factors. First among them might be mentioned the reaction against the excessive stress laid by critics such as Gervinus on guilt in tragedy as moral guilt; such critics were eager to prove that every ill resulted from some moral guilt. To Gervinus, Shakespeare's heroes were all either "the dupes of folly or the slaves of crime";¹ as the world was a realm of perfect justice, those who failed in it did so because of some moral flaw. The implication is, to quote Dixon,² that "another wiser or better or stronger than the defeated hero might have met and sustained the hour and the shock, a more sagacious Brutus, a stronger Othello, a saner Lear". Such critics as Gervinus seek to make the world intelligible to human reasoning. This is clearly too narrow a view for tragedy. Cordelia has done ^{no} "wrong" and yet her sufferings are purely tragic. The age in which Hebbel lived no longer believed, as in Bossuet's time men still believed that the hand of God was in everything, that no one was allowed to suffer who had not done wrong. The orthodox beliefs had been deeply/

1. Whitehead, 23-24. "not only according to 'reason'."

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deeply undermined by Hebbel's time. Instead of these beliefs he gives his metaphysical view, that of the necessary conflict between the individual and the general; and the progress of the Idea through this conflict, at the expense of individual existence.

A second factor influencing Hebbel's view of guilt was the ever-increasing power of science; this continual growth of the influence of science made the conception of the necessary development and gradual evolution of the Idea attractive to Hebbel, as to his age, for it corresponded to the conception favoured by science of the ordered necessity of all development, the "order of nature". Whitehead's description of the faith in the order of nature which has made possible the growth of science could be used to describe Hebbel's faith in the progress of the Idea, through the necessary conflict of the individual with his surroundings.¹ This faith "springs from direct inspection of the nature of things as disclosed in our own immediate experience. There is no parting from your own shadow. To experience this faith is to know that in being ourselves we are more than ourselves: to know that our experience, dim and fragmentary as it is, yet sounds the utmost depths of reality:/"

1. s. T I 1471 & W IX 56²⁵.

2. W X 373^f. "Menschennatur und Menschengeschick:
das sind die beiden Rätsel, die
das Drama zu lösen strebt. Der
Unterschied zwischen dem Drama der
Alten und dem Drama der Neueren
liegt darin: die Alten suchten
bei der Fackel der Poesie die
Labyrinth des Schicksals zu durch-
spähen; wir Neueren suchen die
Menschennatur -- auf gewisse ewige
und unveränderliche Grundzüge ---
zurückzuführen. Jenen war dieses
Zweck, was uns Mittel ist, und
umgekehrt. Bei den Alten das
Leiden aus dem Handeln hervor; ihre
Tragödie war eigentlich ein Triumph
des Instinkts. --- Bei den Neueren
dagegen gebiert das Leiden meistens
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die Idee der Freiheit mit der Idee
der Notwendigkeit nicht sowohl aus-
zugleichen als zu vergleichen. Die
moderne Tragödie hat daher, neben
die alte gestellt, einen kränklichen
Anstrich, den der Umstand, dass das
Individuum ihr Ausgangspunkt ist,
noch erhöht."

& s. T I 1034.

reality: to know that detached details merely in order to be themselves demand that they should find themselves in a system of things: to know that this system includes the harmony of logical rationality and the harmony of esthetic achievement: to know that, while the harmony of logic lies upon the universe as an iron necessity, the esthetic harmony stands before it as a living ideal moulding the general flux in its broken progress towards finer, subtler "issues".

Thirdly, the example of the Greeks, as interpreted in Germany since the "Sturm und Drang" period influenced Hebbel's idea of guilt. The old eighteenth-century classification of ancient and modern tragedy as respectively "fate-" and "character-tragedy" goes back to the theoretical writings of Marmontel; its chief "Sturm und Drang" exponent was Lenz, with whose work Hebbel was familiar¹ and Hebbel makes a similar classification². Schelling "still regarded the Greeks as writers of "fate-tragedy"; he criticises Aristotle's theory of "hamartia" as too narrow. Guilt, according to Schelling, must itself be inevitable, brought about not by an error but rather through the will of fate and an unavoidable destiny or the vengeance of the gods. A real conflict between/

1. Hasenclever, 79^m.

2. Whitehead, 12^u.

between freedom and necessity occurs only when the guilty person is turned by fate into a criminal; he proves his freedom by willingly bearing the punishment for an unavoidable "crime" - to Schelling this is the essence of Greek tragedy. Hegel¹ too, saw Greek tragedy as "fate-tragedy"; to him, the necessity of the tragic conclusion is not evidence of a blind fate, unreasoning and incomprehensible, but of the reasonableness of destiny, of a sort of providence guiding both individual gods and men. This "destiny" pushes back individuality within its limits again, and destroys it when it has outgrown its sphere. Hegel repudiates the conception of fate as blind chance and sees above it a reasoning and reasonable destiny.

In Hebbel's tragedy there is something very like "Fate", not revealing itself as with the Greeks through oracles and signs, but working itself out partly through the characters. Character is fate for Hebbel, as for the Greeks, and fate is the progress of the "Idea", as it was for Hegel also. Hebbel's theory is thus an interesting combination of these two factors, Greek "fate" and the more scientific "order of nature", equated by Whitehead,² to whom the Greek's view of fate, remorseless and indifferent, urging a tragic/

1. Whitehead, 13^u.
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tragic incident to its inevitable issue, was the vision possessed by modern science.¹ The remorseless inevitableness of facts is what pervades scientific thought. For Hebbel, too, as has been seen, the tragic quality lies in the "remorseless working of things".

1. W XI 3¹².

2. Br. V 46⁴. "Mein Talent entzündete sich an der Geschichte und daher rührts, dass allen meinen Dramen vom ersten bis zum letzten die sozialen Verhältnisse (freilich nicht im neu-französischen Sinn) zu Grunde liegen, da sich mit dem historischen Blick das Klebenbleiben am Einzelnen durchaus nicht verträgt, was der philosophische Standpunkt noch viel eher gestattet, sobald er abstrakt bleibt."

HISTORY and TRAGEDY.

Tragedy, for Hebbel, is concerned, as has been seen in the Chapter on Tragic Guilt, with the realms of "Being" and of "Becoming"¹. The relation to "Being", which forms the metaphysical background to Hebbel's theory of tragedy and follows from his general philosophy, has been discussed in an earlier Chapter. We are now concerned with the relation to "Becoming" and to the "precipitate of time, history". Most of Hebbel's tragedies are written on more or less historical themes, and the value of history to the tragic poet is much discussed in his theoretical writings. Looking back in 1852,² Hebel denies the influence of Hegelianism in his work and claims that his talent was "fired by history", and that for this reason social conditions (although not in the sense of the modern French works of which he had been writing) form the basic theme of all his dramas, from first to last; for "exclusive preoccupation with detail is not compatible with the historical way of looking at facts but rather with the philosophic standpoint when it remains abstract".

In his earlier reviews Hebbel was occupied already,
as/

1. W IX 49². "--- so ist es Sache des dramatischen Dichters, --- die Geschichte zu ergänzen, zu zeigen, wie der Charakter, den er sich zum Vorwurf gemacht, geworden ist, was er ist."
2. W IX 48³⁰.
3. T I 780.
4. T II 2946. "Es ist sehr richtig, dass wir Deutsche nicht im Zusammenhang mit der Geschichte unseres Volks stehen. --- Aber worin liegt der Grund? Weil diese Geschichte resultatlos war, weil wir uns nicht als Produkte ihres organischen Verlaufs betrachten können, wie z. B. Engländer und Franzosen, sondern weil das, was wir freilich unsere Geschichte nennen müssen, nicht unsere Lebens-, sondern unsere Krankheits-Geschichte ist, die noch bis heute nicht zur Krisis geführt hat."
5. W XI 60^{10f}.

as we have seen, with this problem of history and tragedy, as for example in the 1835 essay on Körner and Kleist,¹ where he states that the function of drama is to complete history, which is concerned only with results, by making clear the causes and gradual development leading up to these results. Here Hebbel refers the poet to the "Bible of dramatic art", the works of Shakespeare, "who paints a passion at once as root and as tree". Hebbel was a severe critic of many existing historical plays, as for instance of Körner's "Zriny"², of Grabbe's "Napoleon"³, of several modern works which he reviewed for Gutzkow's "Telegraph", and in particular of the German chronicle-plays⁴. These deal, in Hebbel's view, only with externals; they are "pictures without meaning", like the naturalistic plays dealing only with the present. Unlike Shakespeare's historical plays they are capable of no personal interpretation, they have no metaphysical background; they consist in a mere chronicle of dead facts, a conglomeration of details which could find a place in a historical novel such as those of Sir Walter Scott but not in a dramatic work.⁵ The chronicle of historical events in Germany Hebbel considers as particularly unsuited to supplying a subject/

1. W X 371²⁷ f.

& s. W XI 9²⁸.

2. W X 405¹⁸. "Der Geschichte ist es gleichgültig, wie etwas geschieht, wenn es geschieht, sie hat es nicht mit den Individualitäten, sondern nur mit den Kraftäusserungen derselben zu tun, und ihr Heibt in ihrer unendlichen Ausdehnung für jede Dissonanz wenigstens die Hoffnung einer Auflösung. Die Kunst dagegen soll ein Ziel in jedem Schritt sehen, sie soll allem Menschlichen und Göttlichen, wo es ins Gedränge kommt, Satisfaktion verschaffen, sie soll, wenn sie das historische Gebiet betritt, die dunkel-gebliebenen Taten, Begebenheiten und Charaktere ihres verschlossenen inneren Lichts entbinden."

subject for drama, for it is formless, as yet lacking results; it is not a chronicle of the life, but of the maladies of the German people, and has not yet led to a crisis which could round it off and in this sense terminate it. Hebbel agrees with Wienberg¹ that German history taken in this sense is unsuitable as a theme for dramatic representation. These ideas go back to a review, written in 1840, of a historical tragedy, "Masaniello", by Alexander Fischer², in which Hebbel states that history as a science is concerned only with facts, not with their causes; with the expression of energy, not with the individuals whose will supplies this energy. Art, on the other hand, must see an aim in every step; that is to say, it must "afford satisfaction" not only to events themselves but to those who bring about these events; it should offer explanation of the facts, events and characters of recorded history which have not as yet been understood. Hebbel therefore rejects Fischer's work, not because the events themselves which his tragedy records are not tragic, but because Masaniello is not a suitable character for the hero of a tragedy. The metaphysical background is lacking in the work; the facts "mean" nothing and therefore cannot but lack/

1. W XI 9²⁵. "Die Geschichte ist für den Dichter ein Vehikel zur Verkörperung seiner Anschauungen und Ideen, nicht aber ist umgekehrt der Dichter der Auferstehungsengel der Geschichte."
2. "Hamburgische Dramaturgie", Stück XXIV, p.201.
3. T V 1502. "Kurz, die Tragödie ist keine dialogisierte Geschichte; die Geschichte ist für die Tragödie nichts als ein Repertorium von Namen, mit denen wir gewisse Charaktere zu verbinden gewohnt sind. Findet der Dichter in der Geschichte mehrere Umstände zur Ausschmückung und Individualisierung seines Stoffes bequem: wohl, so brauche er sie. Nur dass man ihm hieraus ebensowenig ein Verdienst, als aus dem Gegenteil ein Verbrechen mache." Lessing. Ich denke doch, das Verhältnis zwischen Geschichte und Tragödie kann etwas inneger sein."

lack interpretation.

So, as Hebbel writes in the essay "Mein Wort über das Drama", the poet is not called upon to play in relation to historical facts the part of the "Angel of the Resurrection", but the chronicle of historical events is on the other hand a vehicle at the disposition of the poet who is expressing his own ideas.¹ Yet Hebbel is not quite satisfied with Lessing's view on the relation of historical to tragic art. "Tragedy," writes Lessing,² "is not merely historical material in the form of dialogue. For tragedy, the records of historical events are nothing but a repertory of names with which we are accustomed to associate certain characters. If the poet finds in these chronicles certain circumstances which adorn or individualise his material, good; then let him use them. But let others make neither a virtue nor a crime out of such use." Already in 1839 Hebbel, quoting Lessing's remark, adds that in his own opinion, the relation between historical and tragic art can be a more intimate one.³ For Lessing, who had not the historical sense of Herder and later writers, recorded history was a "repertory of names" for the writer of tragedy. But for Hebbel, with his Theory of the development of the Idea throughout the ages, it was bound to be something/

1. W XI 37¹¹.

2. W XI 60². "Der nüchterne Lessing'sche Ausspruch in der Dramaturgie, wonach der dramatische Dichter Geschichte, je nach Befund der Umstände, benutzt oder unbenutzt lassen darf, --- wird, wenn man ihn nur über die Negation hinaus dahin erweitert, dass das Drama dessenungeachtet den höchsten Gehalt der Geschichte in sich aufnehmen kann und soll, in voller Kraft verbleiben." --- "Shakespeare scheuete nicht etwa die alten Schaumünzen -- wieder blank, sondern -- stellte dar, was noch im Bewusstsein seines Volks lebte, weil es noch lange daran zu tragen und zu zehren hatte."

something more, something in and for itself of very great interest. In "Mein Wort über das Drama" he refers again to Lessing's remark,¹ adding that he is in perfect agreement with the dramatic side of the question, namely with the statement that tragic art is not merely historical art in dialogue form but something quite different from a dead record of facts; in the "Preface to Maria Magdalena" he calls Lessing's a "bald statement"² and supplements it by adding to the statement of what tragedy is not, a definition of what it is, an art-form which can and should absorb in itself the highest content of historical facts.

Shakespeare, adds Hebbel, did not lose himself in historical detail, as his imitators of the Romantic school do in following what they take to be his example; instead, he made use of the yet living part of historical tradition, the condition of the age in relation to the Idea.

Hebbel's philosophy saw, then, in the passage of events something quite different from the facts recorded by historians and massed in the chronicle plays of his contemporaries. At moments of crisis, the sequence of historical events takes on dramatic form without needing any poet to make it do so. This, in Hebbel's/

1. W XI 252³⁰. "Das alles liegt im Josephus, zum Teil klar ausgesprochen, zum Teil nur dunkel angedeutet, und freilich nicht, wie hier, zu einer Kette zusammengeschmiedet, sondern abgerissen und zerstreut. Es rundet sich fast von selbst zur Tragödie. --- Es bedarf einer Kraft, welche die sonst, trotz ihrer dokumentarisch nachzuweisenden Richtigkeit, unglaublich und unwahrscheinlich bleibenden speziellen Ereignisse und Handlungen aus den allgemeinen Zuständen der Welt, des Volks und der Zeit hervorgehen zu lassen versteht, die das Fieber des Herodes aus der Atmosphäre, in der er atmete, und diese aus dem dampfenden, vulkanischen Boden, auf dem er stand, zu entwickeln weiss."

& s. W XI 258³¹ & 259¹⁵.

& W XII, 162¹⁰.

2. W XI 290²⁵. "Niemals ist auf dem Welttheater eine furchtbarere Tragödie aufgeführt worden, wie diejenige, die den Namen des Grafen Johann Friedrich von Struensee trägt."

3. W XI 300²⁴. "Hier der Stoff in seiner Gliederung und Gruppierung nach allen Seiten und mit ihm die Tragödie selbst, denn ich bin der Ueberzeugung, dass nicht ein Element weggelassen, verändert oder abgeschwächt werden darf, wenn der Dichter nicht gegen den Heiligen Geist der Kunst wie der Geschichte zugleich sündigen und seinem Werk die Spitze abbrechen will. --- Ich bin der Meinung, dass man, wenn ein historisches Ereignis in einem der seltensten Fälle die runde, vollendete Kunstform gleich mit auf die Welt bringt, diese nicht zerschlagen oder auch nur verletzen kann, ohne ihm unmittelbar ans Leben zu gehen."

Hebbel's view, was the "more intimate relation" in which historical stood to tragic art, the relation at which Hebbel had hinted in 1839. In the review (written in 1849) of Massinger's "Ludovico", Hebbel gives Josephus' version of the story of Herodes and Mariamne, and concludes that here historical events almost take on the form of tragedy without the poet's aid.¹ The poet is needed, not to make any addition or alteration to the story, but to explain any improbabilities or inconsistencies in the text by referring to the circumstances of the time or the place; for example, in the case of Herod the poet explains his feverish state through the atmosphere of impending crisis in which he lived. The poet's aid is thus required, not to transform the sequence of historical events into the form of drama, but to reveal the fact that these events, rightly interpreted, of themselves take on dramatic form. An example of such a crisis in historical events leading up to the form of tragedy Hebbel finds in the story of Struensee,² to which he refers as the most terrible tragedy ever enacted on the world's stage.³ Here Hebbel goes on to give the story and with it, as he says, the tragedy itself, for Hebbel is convinced that "not one element can be omitted/

1. W XI 344¹⁹.
2. W XII 328³¹ f.

In the review
 (written in 1859) of Hegel's "Aesthetics", Hegel
 gives a somewhat different version of the story of Heracles and
 his death, and comments that many historical events should
 take on the form of tragedy without the poet's aid.
 The poet is added, not to make any addition or
 subtraction to the story, but to explain any impro-
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 refers as the most terrible tragedy ever enacted on
 the world's stage. Hegel goes on to give the
 story with it, as he says, the tragedy itself, for
 Hegel is convinced that "not one element can be

omitted, altered or weakened, if the poet is not to sin against the ^{2/}holy spirit of history" and thus nullify his own work. When a historical event, Hebbel continues, in a rare case produces unaided the full, perfect form of art, this cannot be transformed or even impaired without fatal injury to itself. Hebbel's advice to the writer of historical drama¹ is that, having chosen his theme well, he should "leave the actual sequence of historical events a free hand". For to Hebbel drama is the highest form of art and tragedy the highest form of drama only because the law of drama is at the root of the whole sequence of events in the world, and because in every great crisis events in the world invariably culminate in tragedy.² To Hebbel, the sequence of historical events was a record of the evolution of the Idea in the world, and as such necessarily took the form of a series of crises leading up to tragedy. A year before his death Hebbel wrote as follows: "The whole of the recorded series of historical events in the world is a mill, where the living think they work but where the spirits appoint the tasks. However the presumptuous dwarfs, dancing in the sunlight, toil away, the departed giants, emerging in endless succession from the/

1. T IV 5992. "Die Geschichte ist eine Mühle, worin die Lebendigen zu arbeiten glauben, die Geister aber die Arbeit verrichten. Wie sich die übermütigen Zwerge, die im Sonnenschein herumhüpfen, sich anstrengen mögen, die toten Riesen, die aus der Ewigkeit in unermesslichem Zuge hervorschreiten, machen sie zu unnutzen Knechten und schauen mitleidig auf ihr Gezappel herab."
2. T II 2079. "Die Dichtkunst, die höchste, ist die eigentliche Geschichtschreibung, die das Resultat der historischen Prozesse fasst und in unvergänglichen Bildern festhält, wie z.B. Sophokles die Idee des Griechentums."
3. W XI 5²³. "Das Drama ist schon an und für sich historisch, und die Kunst darf für die höchste Geschichtschreibung gelten, indem sie die grossartigsten und bedeutendsten Lebensprozesse gar nicht darstellen kann, ohne die entscheidenden historischen Krisen, -- mit einem Wort: die Atmosphäre der Zeiten mit zur Anschauung zu bringen."
4. W XI 58³¹f. "Die Kunst kann in dem ungeheuren Meer, worin Welle Welle verschlingt, noch lange Baken stecken und der Nachwelt den allgemeinen und allerdings an sich unverlierbaren, weil unmittelbar im Leben aufgehenden, Gehalt der Geschichte in der Schale der speziellen Perioden -- darbieten."
- & s. W XI 60⁷.

the shadows, transform them into useless subordinates and look pityingly down on their feeble struggles."¹

At first Hebbel makes much of the fact that all drama - indeed all art - is historical in the sense that it is a historical document for the future, revealing the nature of the age in which it was written. In the diary for 1840² comes Hebbel's first reference to "the highest poetry" as the "true historiography, which seizes the results of historical processes and imprisons them in unforgettable images, for example Sophocles the Idea of the Greek world". The expression occurs again in "Mein Wort über das Drama",³ where Hebbel is discussing in what relation drama stands to history and in what measure it is necessarily historical. Hebbel finds that art is by the force of its own nature the highest historiography, as it records the "atmosphere of the age" in which it is written. And in the "Preface to Maria Magdalena"⁴ Hebbel finds the natural source of all drama in historical events; there, too, he pictures art as the only surviving form of historical document in the future, setting as it does in the overwhelming sea of facts and records "long rows of beacons to guide future travellers and preserving the content of history in the form/

1. W XI 9³.
2. W XI 40⁴. "Das Drama, als die Spitze aller Kunst, soll den jedesmaligen Welt und Menschen-Zustand in seinem Verhältnis zur Idee, d. h. hier zu dem alles bedingenden sittlichen Zentrum, das wir im Weltorganismus, schon seiner Selbsterhaltung wegen, annehmen müssen, veranschaulichen."

3. W I 433.

& s. W XI 48⁷.

form of special periods which it epitomises". Posterity, wrote Hebbel in "Mein Wort über das Drama",¹ will not wish to know how our grandfathers appeared in our eyes, but what we ourselves were like; and any form of art which preserves this knowledge for future generations is historical. Drama is a product of the age in which it is written, in the sense that it reveals the state of the world and of humanity (at the time when the work in question was created) to the Idea;² it should in this sense be a mirror of the hour. Hebbel claims in the preface to "Genoveva"³ that a drama is living in proportion as it expresses the age in which it is written, and hopes in "Genoveva", as in "Judith", to have "offered a poet's sacrifice to the age" as he saw it. This is, of course, not the usual meaning attached to the phrase "historical drama", and it is not the only meaning which Hebbel gives to it in his theoretical writings.

In "Mein Wort über das Drama", as well as speaking of all art as "historical" in the sense of being a historical document for the future, Hebbel recognises also the legitimacy of "historical drama" in the ordinary sense of drama on some historical theme. Although the true historical character of drama does not/

1. W XI 9². "Der wahre historische Charakter des Dramas liegt niemals im Stoff; ein reines Phantasiegebilde, selbst ein Liebesgemälde, wenn nur der Geist des Lebens in ihm weht, -- kann sehr historisch sein. Ich will hiermit keineswegs sagen, dass die Poeten ihre dramatischen Dichtungen aus der Luft greifen sollen; im Gegenteil, wenn ihnen die Geschichte oder die Sage einen Anhaltspunkt darbietet, so sollen sie ihn nicht in lächerlichem Erfindungsdünkel verschmähnen, sondern ihn dankbar benutzen."
2. T I 1471⁶¹. "Nur weil sie kein System hat, ist die Geschichte für uns keine echte Tragödie; der Zufall mit dem Schwert in der Hand, das Schicksal, welches Blindkuh spielt, macht uns wahn-sinnig."
3. Br. I 177². "Die begeisterte Stunde bringt dem Genius den Schlüssel zum Weltall."
4. W XI 9¹⁶. "--- wenn er (der Dichter) wahrhaft lebt, wenn er sich nicht klein und eigensinnig in sein dürftiges Ich verkriecht, sondern durchströmt wird von den unsichtbaren Elementen, die zu allen Zeiten im Fluss sind und neue Formen und Gestalten vorbereiten, so darf er dem Zug seines Geistes getrost folgen und kann gewiss sein, dass er in seinen Bedürfnissen die Bedürfnisse der Welt, in seinen Phantasien die Bilder der Zukunft ausspricht."

not lie in the theme itself, the poet should certainly make use of any relevant historical event as a theme for his work and not despise it merely for the sake of inventing an entirely "briginal" story.¹ But, as one might expect from his contempt for the treatment of historical material in chronicle and so-called historical plays, Hebbel demands that such works, to reach the level of art, must give the poet's interpretation of the historical facts. Hebbel had written in 1839² that the sequence of historical events lacks only a rational system underlying it to make it take on for us the form of tragedy; and two years before³ he had stated that the moment of inspiration gives to the poet the "key to the universe", the explanation of the seemingly arbitrary sequence of events in the world. Here, in "Mein Wort über das Drama"⁴, there is a fusion of these two ideas; the poet, giving us - as he must - his own life process in the work which he creates, at the same time and by the same act gives a personal interpretation of historical facts, for "if he is truly alive, he will be urged on by the invisible elements which are always in flux, preparing new forms and shapes. He can then confidently follow his personal inclination and rest assured that in his own needs/

1. W XI 48⁹. "Ich bin mir bewusst, dass die individuellen Lebensprozesse, die ich darstellte und noch darstellen werde, mit den jetzt obschwebenden allgemeinen Prinzipienfragen in engster Verbindung stehen."
2. T IV 5312⁵⁴.
3. T III 3943¹¹⁶.
4. W XI 47^{33f}. "Die dramatische Kunst soll den welthistorischen Prozess, der in unseren Tagen vor sich geht, --- beenden helfen. In diesem Sinn soll sie, wie alle Poesie, die sich nicht auf Superfötation und Arabeskenwesen beschränkt, zeitgemäss sein."
5. W XI 5²⁴. "--- Die höchste Geschichtsschreibung."
& s. T II 2079.
6. T III 3391. "Die Kunst ist die höchste Form des Lebens, wenn nicht des Geistes."
& s. W XI 70¹⁶.
7. W XI 34²⁴. "Ein Drama muss immer dem jedesmaligen Entwicklungsstadium der allgemeinen Weltanschauung entsprechen."
8. W XI 9¹³.
- + Br. 1848. "Ich bringe in jedem meiner Werke das
(Scholz, Resultat eines Bildungsmoments."
p.209¹.)

needs he is expressing the needs of the world, in his mental pictures the images of the future". In his own case, writes Hebbel in the "Preface to Maria Magdalena",¹ he is convinced that the individual life-processes which he has portrayed (in "Judith" and in "Genoveva") and will in later works portray stand in the most intimate relation to the general questions of principles which are occupying men's minds in his own day. "History," Hebbel wrote years later in the diary, "is to me something individual which no one else can write for me."²

Taking this into account, it is easy to understand Hebbel's indignation at Hegel's opinion that art could, and would, become obsolete, that the stage would be reached and passed at which works of art would be created.³ To Hebbel, the work of art rounds off the historical crisis⁴ which it epitomises⁵ and is the highest form of life⁶. At the same time it corresponds to a definite stage of development both of the age in which it was written⁷ and of its author⁸. Drama is, in Hebbel's view, as it were a great circle composed of many smaller ones; the latter refer to the time with which they deal; they must however be brought into relation with each other to form a whole which/

1. T III 3943¹⁰⁷. "Das Drama ist ein aus lauter kleineren zusammengesetzter grosser Kreis; jene kleineren muss die Zeit mit ihrem materiellen Inhalt ausfüllen; ---- Dieser Inhalt aber --- muss in dem sie umschliessenden grossen Kreis des Ganzen geläutert und dialektisch auf seinen wahren Gehalt reduziert werden. Diesen einfachen Gedankengang festgehalten und Hegels Behauptung, dass der Standpunkt der Kunst überwunden sei oder doch überwunden werden könnte, ist widerlegt; ob aber eine Widerlegung auf anderem Wege möglich ist, bezweifle ich stark."
2. T IV 5999.
3. T I 1284. "Denken und Darstellen, das sind die zwei verschiedenen Arten der Offenbarung. Das Denken hat es mit dem Unbeschränktesten zu tun, es verhält sich aber gegen dieses, wie ein bewusstes Gefäss und ist deshalb beschränkt. Das Darstellen wirkt im Beschränkten ein Unbeschränktes; darum sind im Lauf der Zeit alle philosophischen Systeme abgetan worden, aber kein einziges Kunstwerk."
4. T IV 5638. "Wenn der alte Ring der Kunst gesprengt wird, so kann das Produkt, das in ihm möglich war, in gleicher Schönheit nie wieder hervortreten, sondern der neue erzeugt neues, ohne das alte zu beeinträchtigen. Daher die Möglichkeit der Klassizität trotz des ewigen Wechsels."
5. T IV 5660. "In der Kunst, wie in allem Lebendigen, gibt es keinen Fortschritt, nur Varietäten des Reizes."

which portrays the actual state of the world. Art, if it performs this function, cannot, in Hebbel's opinion, be superseded.¹ Sophocles may exhaust the Idea of the Greek world and Shakespeare the subject of ingratitude,² but with the new crises in the manifestation of the Idea in the world of reality, there will always arise new problems, unsolved because up till then unthought-of, problems posed as a result of philosophical systematisation of thought and solved by art. All representation of life (i.e. all art) deals, in contrast to absolute thought, not with the infinite, but makes the impression of infinity within its own bounds. Thus it is that all philosophical systems have in the course of time been superseded, but never a work of art.³ "When the old limits of art are transcended, the product which within them was possible can never again be brought forth with an equal degree of perfection; but the new limits lead up to a new product, without injuring the old. Thence the possibility of classicity in spite of constant change".⁴ "In art, as in everything living, there is no progress, there are only varieties of charm."⁵

There is a third way in which Hebbel links drama with history, namely in claiming that drama has been best/

1. W XI 40²². "Bis jetzt hat die Geschichte erst zwei Krisen aufzuzeigen, in welchen das höchste Drama hervortreten konnte, es ist demgemäss auch erst zweimal hervorgetreten: einmal bei den Alten, als die antike Weltanschauung aus ihrer ursprünglichen Naivität in das sie zuerst auflockernde und dann zerstörende Moment der Reflexion übergang, und einmal bei den Neuern, als in der christlichen eine ähnliche Selbstentzweiung eintrat. Das griechische Drama entfaltete sich, als der Paganismus sich überlebt hatte; --- das Shakespearesche Drama entwickelte sich am Protestantismus und emanzierte das Individuum."
2. W XI 40⁸. "Das höchste Drama ist nur dann möglich, wenn in diesem (d. h. dem Welt- und Menschen-) Zustand eine entscheidende Veränderung vor sich geht; es ist daher durchaus ein Produkt der Zeit."
3. W XI 41¹².
4. W XI 41³².
5. W XI 8¹⁵.

best when written at a period of crisis in the history of the world. In the "Preface to Maria Magdalena"¹ he goes so far as to say that it is possible for drama to be written only at such times, when "a decisive change is taking place in the state of the world and of humanity in relation to the Idea". Hebbel proceeds to illustrate his point by referring to the two crises in recorded history at which drama could - and did - make its appearance.² The first occurred when in the Greek world of thought the original state of naivety gave place to reflection, which weakened and finally destroyed the old order of thought expressed in the "paganism" of the Greeks. The second occurred when in the world of Christian beliefs a similar internal division became manifest. A third crisis is taking place, according to Hebbel, in his own age, which, as an age of social upheaval, is favourable to drama.³ (Goethe, Hebbel goes on to say, in "Faust" and in the "Wahlverwandtschaften", had sensed this impending crisis, but in his own life-process - and consequently in his works - had done no more than to indicate the route which future development would follow.⁴) Already, when writing in "Mein Wort über das Drama" on Gutzkow's works,⁵ Hebbel had expressed/

1. W XI 10⁵.

2. W XI 41¹².

"Goethe hat zu tun angefangen, was allein noch übrig blieb, er hat die Dialektik unmittelbar in die Idee selbst hineingeworfen, er hat den Widerspruch, den Shakespeare nur noch im Ich aufzeigt, in dem Zentrum, um das das Ich sich herum bewegt --- aufzuzeigen versucht. --- Allein er hat nur den Weg gewiesen, man kann kaum sagen, dass er den ersten Schritt getan hat, denn im "Faust" kehrte er, als er zu hoch hinauf und in die kalte Region hineingeriet, wo das Blut zu gefrieren anfängt, wieder um, und in den "Wahlverwandtschaften" setzte er voraus, was er zu beweisen oder zu veranschaulichen hatte.

3. W XI 10².

expressed his approval of social drama, and had foreshadowed later remarks in referring to his ideal of a drama which should be at once "social, historical and philosophical".¹

In the "Preface to Maria Magdalena" this last idea is developed, first with reference to Goethe and his relation to the third universal crisis in the course of historical events, which is to give rise to the third great era of the highest drama. Goethe, in Hebbel's view, had only shown the way;² he had begun to reveal the dualism, not only as in Shakespeare's works in individual character, but in the Idea itself. But although he had seen that this development would take place in the drama of the coming crisis, in his own works Goethe had turned his back on the future, and in "Faust", for instance, had given the life-process of an individual instead of the record of all humanity in relation to the Idea. This work, like the "Wahlverwandtschaften", lacks the highest symbolism, because it does not represent the problems of its own age, and comes for Hebbel into his category of "philosophical drama", which at its best is "some-healthy, but no new species" which could correspond to the new relation of man to the Idea.³ In the "Preface" Hebbel speaks of/

Faust II ?



1. W XI 47³² f.

expressed his approval of social drama. He showed later remarks in relation to his ideal of drama which should be an "ethical, historical and philosophical". In the "Preface to Maria Magdalena" this last idea is developed. It is with reference to Goethe and his relation to the ethical drama in the course of historical events, which is to give rise to the ethical drama. Goethe, in his view, had only shown the way; he had begun to reveal the drama, not only as in Shakespeare's works in individual character, but in the ideal itself. But although he had seen that this development would take place in the drama of the coming era, in his own works Goethe had turned his back on the future, and in "Faust", for instance, had given the life-process of an individual instead of the record of all humanity in relation to the idea. This work, like the "Wahlverwandtschaften", lacks the highest synthesis, because it does not represent the problems of its own age, and comes for Heibel into the category of "philosophical drama", which at the best is "some-what", but no new species which could correspond to the new relation of man to the idea. In the "Preface" Heibel speaks

of his own ideal of a drama at once social, historical and philosophical with reference to his own works "Judith" and "Genoveva". Drama, he writes,¹ like all art, should be "topical" in the sense that it should help to bring to its climax the universal process at present going on and mirrored in the existing human institutions, political, religious and ethical, which it should not undermine but support. Drama is thus necessarily, as well as being historical and philosophical, "social" in the sense of being concerned with the social institutions of the day, to which it supplies a fundamental conception.

In the same year as that of the "Preface to Maria Magdalena" (1844) Hebbel in his diary describes more closely his own aim in historical drama, which is that of a kind of "Légende des Siècles" in dramatic form, in which the individual dramas would be as it were acts in the single drama of past, present and future events. The hero of this drama of history would be not this or that individual but humanity itself, and the theme would embrace not merely isolated events and cases but the whole range of recorded historical fact. Hebbel believed that the drama of the future must and would develop along these lines, whether or not/

1. s.Br. III 62².
2. W XI 59¹⁷.
3. & s. T II 2464¹⁵.
3. W XI 121²³. "Der Dichter hat gar nichts Wichtigeres zu tun, als sich des ganzen Gehaltes der Welt und der Zeit nach Kräften zu bemächtigen, denn dieser ist es ja, dem er eine neue Form aufdrücken soll."
4. Zickel, p.48.

not he was to be the first to write drama of this type,¹ and he refers in the diary entry to his Preface which he is about to publish and in which he speaks of the sequence of historical events itself as the "gradual progress of humanity towards the solution of its problem".² The poet's highest duty, in Hebbel's view, is that of imprinting a new form on the whole content of the world and the age, and this content he finds treasured up in the accumulation of recorded historical facts.³ Without going so far as Cohn and Zickel, who reproach Hebbel with "Anthropomorphism of the Idea", with conceiving the Idea as something finite and capable of being injured and thwarted, and without seeing in Hebbel's view the conviction that "tragedy is concerned with the fate of the Idea, not with the fate of man"⁴, one can none the less see in Hebbel's conception of history a conception of the history of the Idea as it appears in the world of reality in a state of gradual development. This view of history is of course Hegelian. Hegel saw in the state the temporal form which the Idea at its actual stage of development had adopted, and to both Hegel and Hebbel the universal history was the realisation of the Idea.

The highest drama would deal, then, with a crisis/

1. W VI 448. "An den Tragiker".
"Packe den Menschen, Tragöde, an jener
erhabenen Stelle,
Wo ihn die Erde entlässt, weil er
den Sternen verfällt,
Wo das Gesetz, das ihn selbst erhält,
nach gewaltigen Kampf.
Endlich dem höheren weiert, welches
die Welten regiert,
Aber ergreife den Punkt, wo beide noch
streiten und hadern,
Dass er dem Schmetterling glücht, wie
er der Puppe entschwebt."

2. W XI 44¹¹. "Die dramatische Kunst muss sich auf
Bedenkliches und Bedenklichstes ein-
lassen, da das Brechen der Weltzu-
stände nur in der Gebrochenheit der
individuellen erscheinen kann, und da
ein Erdbeben sich nicht anders darstellen
lässt, als durch das Zusammenstürzen der
Häuser und Kirchen und die ungebändigt
hereindringenden Fluten des Meers."

3. W XI 45³³ f. "Nur wo ein Problem vorliegt, hat Eure
Kunst etwas zu schaffen, wo Euch aber
ein solches aufgeht, wo Euch das Leben
in seiner Gebrochenheit entgegentritt
und zugleich in Eurem Geist, denn
beides muss zusammenfallen, das Moment
der Idee, in dem es die verlorne
Einheit wieder findet, da ergreift es,
und kümmert Euch nicht darum, dass der
aesthetische Pöbel in der Krankheit
selbst die Gesundheit aufgezeigt haben
will, da Ihr doch nur den Uebergang zur
Gesundheit aufzeigen und das Fieber
allerdings nicht heilen könnt, ohne
Euch mit dem Fieber einzulassen."

4. T II 3003.

crisis in the evolution of the Idea symbolised in a crisis in the lives of the characters in the drama.¹ Drama would thus inevitably be concerned with "critical relations", for "the breaking-up of the universal conditions can be shown only in the collapse of individual ones, just as an earthquake can be presented only through the collapse of churches and houses and the onrush of the untamed waters".² Hebbel was at the time (1844) much concerned with the question of "morality" in its relation to drama. The theatre-directors had just rejected his "Maria Magdalena" on the grounds that the theme was not in accordance with the usual standards of morality, and Hebbel insists that drama represents the passage from a diseased state to a healthy one, and that the dramatic poet, who is bent on giving not a riddle but a symbol of life, is concerned with problematic situations, in which in a universal crisis all standards (including morality, the then accepted form of the ethical principle) had become obsolete.³ But although Hebbel cites the examples of Gretchen in "Faust" and Klärchen in "Egmont" in defence of his Klara,⁴ he later modified his ideas somewhat, and writes in 1846 that the theme of the highest drama, though never in itself contra-ethical/

1. T III 3809. "Sittlich muss das Drama immer sein, gesittet kann es nicht immer sein."
2. T III 3833. "Mit der Sittlichkeit kann der dramatische Dichter sich niemals in Widerspruch befinden, mit der Moralität nur selten, mit der Konvenienz sehr oft. Die Sittlichkeit ist das Weltgesetz selbst, wie es sich im Grenzensetzen zwischen dem Ganzen und der Einzelercheinung äussert; was tut der Künstler, was tut vor allem der dramatische Dichter anderes, als dass er diese Harmonie aufzeigt und sie an jedem Punkt, wo er sie gestört sieht, wiederherstellt. Die Moralität ist die angewandte, die auf den nächsten Lebenskreis bezogene Sittlichkeit.--- Die Konvenienz ist eine Uebereinkunft, die sehr viel Sittlichkeit und Moralität -- in sich aufnehmen kann, und meistens sehr viel Unslittlichkeit und Unmoralität in sich aufnimmt."
3. T III 3928. "Für Rötischer will ich eine kleine Abhandlung über das Unsittliche in der Kunst schreiben und darin beweisen, dass der Stoff eines Kunstwerks nie unsittlich ist und dass, wenn er unsittlich erscheint, dies durchaus an der Form liegt, nicht aber an der Form an sich, sondern an der ihr anhebbenden zufälligen Mangelhaftigkeit, die durch das darstellende Subjekt bedingt wird."
4. W XI 40⁴.
5. s. W XI 314¹⁹.
6. W IV 341.
7. R.W.Livingstone: "The Greek Ideals and Modern Life," p. 117f.

ethical, may not be acceptable if judged by the moral code of the day.¹ For morality represents for Hebbel only the ethical principle as applied in the world of reality, not the principle itself. "The ethical principle is the law of the world itself; the artist, in particular the dramatic poet, only indicates this harmony, and where he sees it impaired, restores it."² Hebbel planned, though he never wrote it, an essay for Röttscher on the subject of immorality in art.³

Drama, then, as well as being written at periods of crises in the march of historical events, would deal with such periods, in so doing of course reflecting the problems of the author and his own critical age, thus being social, historical, philosophical and a personal interpretation all at once.⁴ This was Hebbel's aim, particularly in his later works: to give a personal interpretation of the past crises in recorded historical events,⁵ not merely to clothe modern problems in a historical disguise.⁶ His aim was to understand the course of historical events as it revealed its purpose in the successive crises in its development, to give it a "meaning", a "system". "Understanding", writes R. W. Livingstone,⁷ "is not the result of knowledge, though without knowledge it stumbles,/"

1. W XI 165¹⁵ - 166¹⁷.

code of the day. For morally responsible for people

only the ethical principle as applied in the world of

reality, not the ethical ideal. "The ethical

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the result of knowledge, knowledge without knowledge is

aimless."

stumbles, but of the sympathetic insight born of a parallel experience. We recognise in others only ourselves. We are at home only in epochs which resemble our own. These ages with which we have spiritual affinities and which have anticipated our problems have a special interest and instructiveness for us. They are our 'Doppelgänger'. We recognise our face in theirs. --- The experience (of the past) may foreshadow the development of these difficulties (of the present) and suggest a way to meet them." These words sum up what was Hebbel's view too, making it clear to us why his drama deals with the crises in the sequence of historical events.

In connection with the Schiller-Körner correspondence,¹ (which, he writes, makes a new Schiller biography necessary) Hebbel emphasises the importance of a study of the development leading up to a state for the understanding of that particular state. He contrasts the view taken by the crowd, which judges a tree simply by its fruits, with that of the researcher into nature's laws, who studies the growth of the tree and the soil in which it is planted; he does this in order to gain deeper insight into the "nature of life". While rejecting Hegel's bold claim that all mysteries are to be explained away by this method/

1. W XI 165³⁴ f. "Das Werden erhellt das Sein. Wer das Werden zum Gegenstand seiner Betrachtung macht und die Bedingungen, unter denen sich die verschiedenen Modalitäten desselben so oder anders gestalten, dem lichtet sich auch der Urprozess, auf dem das Sein beruht. Diese Beobachtungen werden aber ohne Zweifel mit ebenso grosser Erspriesslichkeit in der Geisterwelt angestellt, als in der physischen. Es ist das nämliche, ob das Schicksal mit einem bedeutenden Menschen experimentiert, oder der Naturforscher mit einem merkwürdigen Tier und einer seltenen Pflanze."

2. Br. IV 74². "Ich will in diesem Stück durchaus nichts anhängig machen von Stimmungen und Entschlüssen, die nur auch relativ begründet in den Charakteren und den Verhältnissen, so, aber auch anders sein können; es soll sich zu dem, was sich darin ereignet, ein jeder, der Mensch ist, bekennen müssen."

3 1. T III 3865.

method, Hebbel does assert¹ that "the Becoming does throw light on the Existent. He who makes the Becoming the object of his study and considers the conditions governing its various forms, thereby throws light on the original process ruling the Existent". This rule holds true for both the spiritual and the physical world, Hebbel goes on to say, and is even more apparent in the former than in the latter. "It is the same thing if fate experiments with a notable individual or the research student with a curious animal or a rare plant".

It follows from Hebbel's conception of historical drama as dealing with the crises in the development of universal history, that in such drama the events must be ordered by "absolute necessity". Hebbel several times refers to "Herodes und Mariamme" in particular as a tragedy of "absolute necessity" and is determined, as he writes in 1847,² to find a reasonable explanation for each fact leading up to the catastrophe. Nothing is to be left to moods and decisions only partially accounted for by the characters and situations and consequently capable of more than one result or set of results. "As any crystallisation," wrote Hebbel in 1846,³ "is dependent on certain chemical conditions, so/

1. Br. IV 207¹². "Ich habe in diesem Werk ---, den Begriff der Notwendigkeit, und einer solchen, die immer zugleich, wie es der historischen Tragödie geziemt, aus inneren und äusseren Bedingungen hervorgeht, im strengsten Sinne durchzuführen gesucht. Dabei habe ich mir die Aufgabe gestellt, die Form möglichst zu vereinfachen und die grossen historischen Massen sowohl die, die Faktoren des psychologischen Prozesses bilden, als auch das Detail der Nebenpersonen und der Situationen in den Hintergrund zu drängen, da ich überzeugt bin, dass aus dem Stil der Griechen und dem Stil Shakespeares durchaus ein Mittleres gewonnen werden muss."

so every individualisation of humanity on the nature of the historical epoch in which the individual lives. The chief task of poetry in relation to historical events is to portray these modifications of human nature in their relative necessity; and here, in the event of a perfect representation, poetry reaches its greatest heights. It is so difficult, however, to separate the chance detail from the task itself, as well as to guard against personal prejudice, that there has hardly as yet been a beginning made towards the creation of such dramas."

In "Herodes und Mariamne" Hebbel has sought according to his own testimony to emphasise and in the action of the play to symbolise the conception of necessity in its strictest sense, of such necessity as springs at once from internal and external conditions, and thus is suitable for a historical drama. "In doing this," continues Hebbel,¹ "I have set myself the task of simplifying the form as much and of keeping in the background the mass of historical fact, both that which forms the factors in the psychological development and that which consists in the detail of secondary characters and situations. My reason for this treatment is because I believe that some means must/

1. s. W XI 140¹⁵.

of the historical epoch in which the individual lives.

The chief task of poetry in relation to historical

events is to convey these manifestations of human

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"In doing this," explains Heibel, "I have not myself

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development and that which consists in the detail of

secondary characters and situations. My reason for

this treatment is because I believe that some means

must

must be sought combining the style of the Greeks with that of Shakespeare". It would seem, by the reference to internal and external conditions, as well as to the Greeks and Shakespeare, that Hebbel envisaged a synthesis between fate- and character-drama.¹

This impression is deepened when one seeks examples in Hebbel's own works of a synthesis between the two types of drama. In "Herodes und Mariamne", for example, the action of the play turns round a personal conflict and in the work one has a study of character such as one finds in Shakespearean drama. There is personal conflict going on between the two chief characters whose individual natures are so at variance: Herod impetuous, grasping, with the hunger of the man unsupported by tradition, a prey to his passing feelings and therefore sincere without being consistent; and Mariamne, reserved, naturally giving least outward sign of what affected her most, with the traditions and pride of her race behind her. But on the other hand, too, the characters "crystallise" the forces in solution at their time and so are the puppets of "Fate" in the sense of Greek tragedy. We have seen how Hebbel found the explanation for the character of Herod in the feverish atmosphere of the age/

1. s. W XI 253¹³.
2. Abercrombie, p.99.
3. T II 2414.
4. W XI 6¹⁵.
5. W XI 36²⁸.

This impression is deepened when one seeks examples in Handel's own works of a synthesis between the two types of drama. In "Xerxes and Artabanus" for example, the action of the play turns round a personal conflict and in the work one has a study of character such as one finds in Shakespearean drama. There is personal conflict going on between the two chief characters whose individual natures are so at variance: Herod impetuous, grasping, with the hunger of the man unsupported by tradition, a prey to his passing feelings and therefore sincere without being consistent; and Artabanus, reserved, naturally giving least outward sign of what affected her most, with the traditions and pride of her race behind her. But on the other hand, too, the characters "crystallise" the forces in solution at their time and so are the puppets of "Fate" in the sense of Greek tragedy. We have seen how Handel found the explanation for the character of Herod in the Jewish atmosphere of the

age in which he lived, and the explanation of the atmosphere in the "seething, volcanic ground" on which he stood.¹ There is a similar duality in the characters of all Hebbel's major works; for instance, those of "Gyges und sein Ring" are clearly seen as individual personalities and at the same time representatives of the thought of their age.

In treating the question of faithfulness to historical fact in drama, Hebbel points out on several occasions that all art is symbolic: that is, as has been seen, it imitates "not life, but a conception of life", as Abercrombie writes,² by means of its particular medium. The symbolic character of drama, Hebbel had written in 1841³, is not confined solely to the idea which it embodies, but applies to every one of its elements; and Hebbel repeats his words in "Mein Wort über das Drama",⁴ adding that drama is at once something more and something less than the chronicler's accounts of events and descriptions of men⁵ - something more, because it is concerned not with the perishable "material part of history" but with the "spiritual part", the development of the Idea: something less, because it makes no use of the dead mass of historical detail so dear to the chronicler/

1. W XI 59²⁹ f.
2. W XII 326²⁸ f.
3. T II 2414.
- & s. W XI 6¹⁶.
- & W XI 45⁴.
4. Dilthey: "Von deutscher Dichtung und Musik",
p. 381-2, 382-3, & 411²¹.
5. W XI 9¹⁰.
- & s. W XII, 21²⁰.

chronicler, but with one touch makes the past live again.¹ (Hebbel came to see that the true historian did the same thing, for he too dealt, like the dramatist, not with so-called facts but with the ideas governing and characterising the epoch to be depicted.²) As the painter uses his colours, so the dramatist uses historical figures, to express his view of the nature of things.³ Comparison of the work of art with the historically "accurate" model is therefore out of place, because the poet producing the work of art (in this case drama) is creating a new world of his own in his imagination, a world in which, as Dilthey says,⁴ the meaning of the real world is found.

For the reason, a myth can be just as good a starting-point for historical drama as a record of historical facts;⁵ the highest drama uses one or the other as a basis. The Greeks founded their drama on their mythology, Shakespeare dramatised English history, and the German poets should make similar use of the "Nibelungenlied" and thus preserve it for future ages, as the Greeks and Shakespeare have preserved the themes which they chose for their works. For in the last instance historical fact lives only in works of/

1. T IV 6272.

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of art (and, as Hebbel with the belief shared by his age in science, added, in works of science). "Lord Palmerston would have a longer existence if he were a comma in the writings of Shakespeare than now, when he is the chief voice in the Council of State."¹

1. Bywater, p.50.
2. T I 1575. "Die Aufgabe müsste sein, den Nero zu vermenschlichen, ihn auf etwas Ewiges in der Menschennatur zurückzuführen."
3. W XI 4¹⁶. "Dramatisch ist es völlig gleichgültig, ob der Held an einer vortrefflichen oder einer verwerflichen Bestrebung scheitert."

& s. Bradley, "Oxford lectures", p.27:

"It makes no difference whether they meant well or ill."

TRAGIC CHARACTER AND MOTIVATION.

It was Hebbel's belief, as has been seen, that every strong character comes into conflict with its surroundings through the natural process of self-assertion; this conflict Hebbel calls the process of life. It follows, then, that Aristotle's remark about the choice of the right kind of character for tragedy (Aristotle chooses a man "not pre-eminently virtuous and just, whose misfortune, however, is brought upon him not by vice and depravity but by some error of judgement")¹ cannot satisfy Hebbel. For him, it is enough for the tragic character to be a man in the full sense of the word; for the tragic conflict is given with and implicit in life itself. This is Hebbel's pantragic view of life, which has already been discussed. In an early criticism of Gutzkow's "Nero",² he writes that the aim of the writer of the tragedy must be to "make Nero human, to trace back his character to some eternal factor in human nature".

Dramatic ^{w/}gilt springing as it does directly from the individual will itself, the ethical quality of the hero's aim is a secondary matter.³ What tragedy, in Hebbel's view, particularly makes clear is "how all (individual)/

1. W XI 52³⁰. "Alles Handeln löst sich dem Weltwillen gegenüber in ein Leiden auf, und gerade dies wird in der Tragödie veranschaulicht."
2. T III 4717. "Jeder Charakter ist ein Irrtum."
3. T II 2910. "Es war meine Absicht, das bürgerliche Trauerspiel zu regenerieren und zu zeigen, dass auch im eingeschränktesten Kreis eine zerschmetternde Tragik möglich ist, wenn man sie aus den rechten Elementen, aus den diesem Kreise selbst angehörigen, abzuleiten versteht."
4. W XI 62³⁰.
5. T III 3851. "Der Einzelne kann sich der Welt gar nicht gegenüberstellen, ohne sein kleines Recht in ein grosses Unrecht zu verwandeln."
6. W IX 52¹⁶.
7. T I 1496⁴⁴. "Die Charaktere in Emilia Galotti sind zu absichtlich auf ihr endliches Geschick, auf die Katastrophe berechnet. --- Mensch und Schicksal müssen sich an einem Ort begegnen, wo man es nicht erwarten konnte, und wo man desungeachtet, wenn man näher hinsieht, nicht die verhüllte Larve des Zufalls, sondern das ernste Antlitz der Notwendigkeit erblickt."

(individual) action, because it comes into conflict with the universal will which we call by the name of "fate", culminates in suffering.¹ Hebbel calls every individual character an "error,"² and it is so in the sense that it represents a deviation from the universal will. Hebbel declares his aim in writing "Maria Magdalena" to have been to "regenerate domestic tragedy and to show that even within the most limited scope a shattering tragedy is possible";³ that to have a tragic fate, one needs nothing more than simply to be a man.⁴ "It is impossible for the individual to confront the world without changing his little right into a great wrong."⁵

But although every character is in this sense tragic, for drama, because of the necessity for quick and impressive development, Hebbel demands a particularly strong character; in other words, he calls for one whose will, as the centre of dramatic action, is unusually strong. He criticises Körner's characters,⁶ for instance, as not being firm or deliberate enough to form the centre of dramatic action. Hebbel's first criticism of the characters in "Emilia Galotti"⁷ is that they are too mechanical, too obviously constructed with reference to their destiny, suffering/

1. W XI 3²⁴.
2. T II 2578. "Die Helden stürzen, weil sie sich überheben."
3. W XI 30⁷.
4. W XI 30²⁹. "--- das Meisterstück der Meisterstücke, Antigone, dem sich bei Alten und Neuern nichts an die Seite stellen lässt."
"Antigone will eine heilige Pflicht erfüllen, bewusst die Verwandten- und Liebespflicht gegen den unbestraften daliegenden Bruder, unbewusst die Pflicht der Ehrfurcht gegen die Götter, und dennoch geht sie unter, obgleich sie nichts als ein bürgerliches, in sich selbst unhaltbares u. nur der Form nach die Idee des Staates repräsentierendes Gesetz übertritt."
4. T II 4307. "Wallensteins schändlicher Betrug, --- wie verträgt er sich mit der Würde eines tragischen Charakters?"

suffering rather than calling down upon themselves their fate. Drama deals with the relation to the whole of the individual who has quitted his original sphere and has risen above it.¹ "The heroes fall because they rise above their sphere," writes Hebbel in the diary for 1842², defining what he calls the "curse of power". Only the "notable" individual is a suitable subject, then, for a tragedy, although every individual is in Hebbel's sense "tragic".

Hebbel says little of the moral requisites in a tragic hero, but as he speaks of the moving tragedy as one which results when the action of the hero is "good" in the ordinary sense,³ it may be presumed that he held the view that the tragic hero should be of noble character for the highest tragic effect to be obtained. Hebbel's praise of "Antigone"⁴ as the "masterpiece of masterpieces" points to the same conclusion. Antigone is fulfilling a sacred duty and transgressing only a formally justifiable law. And in connection with "Wallenstein"⁵ Hebbel speaks of the "dignity" of the tragic character, wondering how such (evidently moral) dignity can be compatible with Wallenstein's ethically unjustifiable deception of Butler.

Certain/

1. T II 2260. "Dass poetische Charaktere zugleich individuell und allgemein sein sollen: was ist's denn weiter als die Aufgabe, die die Natur alle Tage und in jedem Menschen löst?"
2. T II 1958. "Judith und Holofernes sind, obgleich --- wahre Individualitäten, dennoch zugleich die Repräsentanten ihrer Völker. Judith ist der schwindelnde Gipfelpunkt des Judentums; --- Holofernes ist das sich überstürzende Heidentum, er fasst in seiner Kraftfülle die letzten Ideen der Geschichte."
- & s. W XI 13⁴.
- & s. W XI 253¹².
3. Br. V 306¹⁵. "Halten Sie sich an das Bild selbst und vergegenwärtigen Sie sich die Welt, der es angehört. Dass das Weib selbst für die Griechen eine Sache war, wissen Sie aus dem Homer; --- Dass diese Sache sich aber doch selbst unter den barbarischen Lydiern zuweilen in eine Person verwandelte, zeigt die Fabel des Herodot, die mir als Stoff diente. Dies einfach aufgenommen, wie es geboten wird, und die Tragödie ergibt sich ohne weitere Zutat."
4. W XI 56⁸. " --- dass der echte dramatische Darstellungsprozess --- die dualistischen Ideenfaktoren, aus deren Aneinanderprallen der das ganze Kunstwerk entzündende schöpferische Funke hervorspringt, zu Charakteren verdichten wird."

Certain consequences with regard to the choice of tragic character result from Hebbel's views which have already been discussed. From his metaphysical interest follows the demand that the poetic character should be at once individual and general.¹ This demand Hebbel finds satisfied by Nature in the case of every human being, and he considers that drama in portraying the process of life should follow the lead of Nature. So, for example, Judith and Holofernes are individuals but at the same time representatives of their peoples and of their age.² It has been seen how important this point was for Hebbel's conception of the relation between history and tragedy. Hebbel's advice to the reader of "Gyges"³ is to concentrate on the representation (of the underlying Idea) and to bear in mind the age to which it belongs. The tragedy follows inevitably from a realisation of the stage of development which thought had reached at that time and place regarding the status of women. Hebbel seems to suggest beginning the process of dramatisation with a "dualistic nucleus of ideas",⁴ from the conflict between which the creative spark lighting up the whole work of art is struck, and which are embodied in the characters. He warns against mere "allegorical decking/

1. W XI 46²⁹. "--- ein allegorisches Herausputzen der Idee."
2. W XI 46³¹. "--- die ins Leben selbst verlegte Dialektik."
3. T I 1471⁴¹.
4. T II 2730. "Schon zum Begriff eines Charakters gehört die Idee. Nur die Idee macht den Unterschied zwischen dramat. Charakteren und dramat. Figuren."
5. W XI 33⁹.
6. W XI 32⁵.
7. T III 4189. "--- Die Unauflöslichkeit des überall hervortretenden Dualismus der Welt zur Anschauung gebracht."
- & s. T I 1958¹¹. "--- Judentum und Heidentum sind wiederum nur Repräsentanten der von Anbeginn in einem unlösbaren Dualismus gespaltenen Menschheit; und so hat der Kampf --- die höchste symbolische Bedeutung."

decking-out of an idea",¹ contrasting it with the portrayal of "dialectic transfused into life itself";² for him this general quality in the poetic character distinguishes it from a mere "figure". Lenz' poetic characters³ were too free, too little in harmony with the idea dominating their little world of action, thus leaving room only for mere characteristic and the rule of blind chance, suitable at best for lesser comedy alone. The Idea, the general quality, forms in Hebbel's view an integral part of the nature of character,⁴ and this is true also of comedy at its best; Falstaff is a comic character because he is "aware of his independence from the influences of nature by which he is swayed". The characters of drama move at greater or less distance round the Idea which forms the central point, and in this Idea they find their starting-point and their goal.⁵ Hebbel ridicules Heiberg⁶ for imagining that the interest in drama can be centred in the characters considered by themselves and not in relation to the Idea underlying the whole work. In Laube's "Monaldeschi"⁷ Hebbel sees to his disgust the conflict of two individuals instead of the portrayal in two characters of the dualism of the world. In a letter to Edmund Palleske/

1. T III 4360¹⁷.
2. T III 4998.
3. T III 4790.
4. W XI 5¹⁶. "Das vollkommenste Lebensbild entsteht dann, wenn der Hauptcharakter das für die Neben- und Gegencharaktere wird, was das Geschick, mit dem er ringt, für ihn ist, und wenn sich auf solche Weise alles, bis zu den untersten Abstufungen herab, in-, durch-, und miteinander entwickelt, bedingt und spiegelt."
- & s. W XI 31⁹.
5. W XI 280¹⁸.

Palleske¹ he distinctly identifies the characters with the "vehicles of the ideas" and says that they give to these a concrete, living form. "In drama no thought should be given direct utterance, because all the characters help to give expression to the Idea of the drama².

It follows from this conception of character that all the characters in a drama, not merely the hero, should be drawn in the round.³ There must necessarily be one or two chief characters embodying in themselves or in their relations to each other the "dualism of the Idea", and the ideal relation of the other characters to them is maintained when the subordinate characters stand in the same relation to the hero as that in which he stands to fate.⁴ This state of interdependence and relation serves to give the best picture of life and affords a central point to the action in the person of the hero who "gathers around him the other characters in duly graded groups", and is the centre of the action.⁵

Hebbel's individual dramas he hopes to link up into one drama of past, present and future, dealing with one hero, humanity, and embracing the whole of the sequence of historical events. To this end he wishes/

1. Br. III 62⁸.
2. T III 4908. "Wäre es dem Menschen doch endlich beizubringen, dass der dramatische Dichter sich in demselben Sinn auf jede Spezies menschlicher Charaktere einlassen muss, wie der Naturforscher auf jede Tier- und Pflanzengattung, gleichviel, ob sie schön oder hässlich, giftig oder heilsam ist, indem er die Totalität darzustellen hat."
3. T II 2926. "Jetzt sind alle Mauslöcher ausgestopft und ich bin zufrieden, besonders damit dass sie eigentlich alle recht haben."
4. W XII 329¹³. "Es gibt auch hier (d. h. in der Geschichte, wie im Drama) keinen Moment, wo irgend ein Recht sich durchsetzen könnte, ohne irgendein Unrecht zu begehen."
5. W XI 208²⁰. "In der Tragödie darf niemand fallen, als durch sich selbst."

wishes to do justice to all kinds of characters¹ and to deal with them all, regarding them as the naturalist regards his specimens, with reference not to their individual qualities but rather to their place in the scheme of the world.²

From Hebbel's pan-tragic view of life it follows, as has been seen, that all the characters of his drama are equally justified from their own point of view. They are all, as in "Maria Magdalena" "in the right";³ and consequently no "villains" should be necessary in the highest drama. And while being from their own point of view in the right, the characters through their very individuality are in a state of conflict with the Idea, and are consequently in Hebbel's sense "guilty".⁴ Speaking of "Wallenstein", Hebbel remarks that it is fortunate that the so-called "ideal" figures of Max and Thekla remain lifeless, as otherwise they would be not tragic but horrible, for the completely guiltless would then be sacrificed in place of the guilty. "In tragedy, no one must fall but through himself":⁵ this was an axiom for Hebbel, in accordance with his pan-tragic view of life.

What Hebbel stresses most is the need for careful motivation and in particular for the presentation of character/

1. W XI 49⁶.
2. W XI 56¹³. "Goethe zeichnet die unendlichen Schöpfungen des Augenblicks, die ewigen Modifikationen des Menschen durch jeden Schritt, den er tut."
3. T I 1756. "Die Motive vor einer Tat verwandeln sich meistens während der Tat und scheinen wenigstens nach der Tat ganz anders."

character as something continually growing and reflecting the influence of its surroundings. He constantly makes appeal to the example of Shakespeare in this. In the early essay on Körner and Kleist¹ he refers to Shakespeare's works as the "Bible of dramatic art", and praises the way in which Shakespeare portrays a passion as "at the same time root and tree"; it is the province of the dramatic poet, in Hebbel's view, to supplement history by showing how a character has become what it is. In the same essay² Hebbel contrasts Goethe's with Schiller's characters; the latter's characters he finds static, suitable consequently for historical in the sense of chronicle-drama as Hebbel then understood it. Goethe, on the other hand, shows the mark of genius in his treatment of character; he does this (according to Hebbel) by letting us see the "continual modifications wrought on a man by every step he takes". Goethe, like Kleist, displays for us in his characters the "endless creations of the moment". Thinking of his "Judith", Hebbel writes in his diary³ that the motives leading on to an act usually change while the action is being performed and afterwards appear quite different; this important point, Hebbel adds, is overlooked by most/

1. T I 1685. "Von grösster Wirkung sind im Dramatischen die zurückspringenden Motive, diejenige, die nur etwas Altes zu bestätigen scheinen und doch etwas ganz Neues bringen."
2. W XI 4²⁵. "Von der allergrössten Wichtigkeit (im modernen Drama) ist die Behandlung der Charaktere. Diese dürfen in keinem Fall als fertige erscheinen, die nur noch allerlei Verhältnisse durch- und abspielen und wohl äusserlich an Glück oder Unglück, nicht aber innerlich an Kern und Wesenhaftigkeit gewinnen oder verlieren können. Dies ist der Tod des Dramas, der Tod vor der Geburt. Nur dadurch, dass es uns veranschaulicht, wie das Individuum im Kampf zwischen seinem persönlichen und dem allgemeinen Weltwillen, der die Tat, den Ausdruck der Freiheit, immer durch die Begebenheit, den Ausdruck der Notwendigkeit, modifiziert und umgestaltet, seine Form und seinen Schwerpunkt gewinnt, --- nur dadurch wird das Drama lebendig."
3. W XI 333². "--- der Werdeprozess eines bedeutenden Menschen."

most dramatists. In drama, therefore, the greatest effect can be obtained through recurring motives which seem to confirm something already established and in reality contribute something new.¹ Hebbel cites an example here from Hamlet's monologue in which the recurring idea of sleep suggests new thoughts to him. Thus the progress in the evolution of the character can be measured.

In modern drama - Hebbel again quotes the example of Shakespeare - the treatment of character is of the utmost importance.² It is death to the drama to portray the characters as something complete and finished in themselves, able to reflect and to react to all kinds of situations but not to win or lose in essence. Drama in Hebbel's view became a living thing only "as it shows us how the individual, involved in a conflict between its personal and the universal will which modified and alters action (the expression of freedom) through event (the expression of necessity) gains its form and its centre of gravity." In drama, then, in Hebbel's own words, (used of Kleist's "Prinz von Homburg") we have directly displayed before us the "evolution of a notable individual".³

Hebbel confesses that when writing his "domestic tragedy"/

1. T II 2910¹⁵. "Das Hauptvergnügen des Dichtens besteht für mich darin, einen Charakter bis zu seinem im Anfang von mir selbst durchaus nicht zu berechnenden Höhepunkt zu führen und von da aus die Welt zu überschauen."

2. T I 1496³⁷.

& T II 2413.

3. T III 3795²⁴.

tragedy" he was obliged to limit himself, so as to avoid overstepping the narrower bounds of this particular type of drama. He had to resist the temptation of yielding to his greatest pleasure as a poet, that of "leading a character up to a climax not envisaged by the writer from the beginning, and from this point of vantage surveying the world".¹ Hebbel owns here that he tended to let his delight in the portrayal of character in evolution run away with him. What he was particularly anxious that the dramatist should avoid, was the construction of characters ad hoc, fashioned to fit a preconceived catastrophe, so that they were not typically human but could only exist in the given circumstances. It has already been noted that Lessing's characters seemed at first to Hebbel to be of this type,² although later he modified his opinion. He had a similar criticism to make of Grabbe's treatment of character; he accuses Grabbe of creating abstractions rather than true characters: "if Grabbe's tendency allowed of absolute consistency, his characters would appear merely in order to cut their own throats".³

The character, then, must form a whole with individual characteristics; Julius Mosen has idealised the character of Frederick the Great in the wrong way/

1. W XII 223⁷.
2. W XII 223¹⁵. "Der Dichter darf nur steigern, was wirklich vorhanden ist, nicht hinzutun, was dem Grundton eines Charakters widerspricht."
3. T II 2865.
4. T III 4119. "Die Charaktere im Drama werden nur dann mit der höchsten Meisterschaft behandelt, wenn der Dichter --- ihnen gar nicht erst besondere Entschlüsse, d. h. Anläufe zu bestimmten Taten unterzulegen braucht, sondern wenn diese unmittelbar aus ihrer Natur hervorgehen und die gegenseitigen Täuschungen nur aus den gegenseitigen Irrtümern über deren Beschaffenheit und Wesenheit entspringen."
- & s. T III 4158.
5. T I 1471¹⁴.

way (in Hebbel's opinion) by giving him characteristics which he possesses only in so far as they belong to human nature itself; there was no basis of individuality upon which to build up contrasts.¹ In the working out of his characters when once conceived, the dramatic poet, writes Hebbel, can only accentuate what is already present; he must not introduce elements which contradict the whole general basis of the particular character.² Hebbel in contrasting Goethe's with Shakespeare's characters³ considers that he is distinguishing between the creations of epic and dramatic natures. In the former, the extremes appear beside each other, in the latter they arise from each other. In Hebbel's view, then, the ideal dramatic character is one portrayed in continual evolution along lines consistent with a strongly developed individuality.

The well-drawn character must not seem to make any deliberate decisions to act; his action should follow inevitably and directly from his nature.⁴ Hebbel's criticism of Lenz' dramas, in particular of "Die Soldaten"⁵ is that the character of the heroine is not in contrast to her fate, that what once had been a source of misfortune to her might in other circumstances/

1. T I 1475³².
2. T II 2966⁵⁶. "Das ist nicht tragisch, das erfüllt uns nicht mit jenem ehrfurchtsvollen Schauern vor der allwaltenden höchsten Macht, die in dem Moment, wo sie sich zwischen ein welthistorisches Individuum und den welthistorischen Zweck, den es verfolgt, hindernd und zerstörend hinstellt, beides zugleich aufzeigt: in dem Individuum den faulen Fleck, der der wirklichen Realisierung dieses Zwecks durch dasselbe im Wege steht, und ausser dem Individuum ein anderes Medium des Zwecks, welches eben dieses Individuum entbehrlich macht."
3. T III 3323⁷⁷.
4. T IV 6085. "Die Welt kenne ich nicht; --- den Menschen aber kenn'ich, denn ich bin selbst einer, und wenn ich auch nicht weiss, wie er aus der Welt entspringt, so weiss ich doch sehr wohl, wie er, einmal entsprungen, auf sie zurück wirkt. Die Gesetze der menschlichen Seele respektiere ich daher ängstlich."
5. W XI 243³³. "Ein Kunstwerk, das dessen (= des Uebernatürlichen) bedürftig ist, steht nie so hoch, wie eines, das ^{sich} ganz auf die reale Welt stützt."
- T IV 5933. "--- eine in allen ihren Motiven natürliche Tragödie."
- & s. T IV 5754.

circumstances be for her happiness, in other words, the catastrophe results from the circumstances instead of arising out of the nature of the character itself. Of "Golo" Hebbel writes at the same time:¹ "Golo loves a beautiful woman entrusted to his care, and he is no Werther: herein lies all his misfortune, his guilt and his justification". Here the whole tragedy clearly arises out of the natures of the characters. Hebbel criticises the motivation in "Don Karlos"² and suggests an alternative action; in which at least the "character would find its logical completion in itself". He has the same fault to find in Kleist's "Käthchen von Heilbronn,"³ in which the character is not made to triumph through itself but by means of outward agency which affects the action.

This insistence on the actions of a character being the direct outcome of his nature is linked up with Hebbel's conception of guilt which has already been discussed. In tragedy, no one falls but through himself; and it is for this reason that Hebbel prides himself on "respecting the laws of the human soul"⁴ and making his tragedies perfectly "natural"⁵, that is, without any trace of supra-human motivation. "'Gyges' is possible without the ring/

1. T IV 6085.
2. W XI 244⁴.
3. W XII 163⁵.
4. W XI 328²⁵ f.
5. W XII 293¹². "---- die so unendlich wichtigen
unausgesprochenen Motive, die
unmittelbar aus den Charakteren
resultieren."
6. T II 3063.
W XI 237³³ f.
& W XII 251¹⁴.

ring, the 'Nibelungen' without the invulnerable skin and the vanishing-cap; try, and you will find it so."¹

In the same way, the ghost in "Hamlet" is an accessory.² In 1861 Hebbel again refers to Shakespeare's example in the motivation of character, comparing it to that of Lessing, of whom he had revised his opinion. "The greatness of Shakespearian drama," he writes,³ "has its roots in the composition, and the composition in its turn in the motivation. --- In this too Lessing is a master. He thinks nothing beautiful which is not necessary and nothing necessary which does not spring wholly and spontaneously from the nature of men and things." Shakespeare, writes Hebbel in another review,⁴ knows how to avoid giving pictures of villains; instead, he relates even his most terrible characters to natural conditions which ensure them their right of existence. All have thus a relative right to act as they do. In the essay on "Shakespeare and his contemporaries"⁵ Hebbel refers again to the "incalculably important inexpressed motives which spring directly from the characters".

Hebbel finds repetitions of the same situation or motive as well as surprises⁶ unsuitable for drama, because/

1. W XI 250¹⁷.

2. T I 888. "Das beste Motivieren ist am Ende das Motivieren durch analoge Fakta, genommen aus den heterogensten Verhältnissen."

3. W XI 61²⁶.

because the changing nature of the characters makes such repetitions unnatural. The same situation cannot occur twice, for the characters placed again in it were changed by it the first time. We know from his diary and in particular from his review of Massinger's "Ludovico"¹ how much thought Hebbel gave to the motivation of the situation in "Herodes und Mariamne" where Herod for the second time places Mariamne under the charge of one commanded to kill her should he, Herod, not return from his expedition. The best kind of motivation, according to Hebbel,² is motivation through analogous facts arising from the most varied situations; these will demonstrate at once the unchanging nature of individual character and the influence of man's surroundings upon him.

The action of the character should then result from his nature. And it has been noted that the nature of the dramatic character is at once individual and general. Tragedy, for Hebbel, is concerned with the relation to the whole, of the notable individual who has left his sphere; and the motivation through the nature of the character must reflect this "critical relation". Hebbel writes in the "Preface to Maria Magdalena"³ that the confusion of motives in Judith/

1. W XI 59²⁴.

2. T II 1872. "Taten der Art dürfen der Begeisterung, die sich später durch sich selbst gestraft fühlt, gelingen, aber nicht der Verschlagenheit, die in ihrem Glück ihr Verdienst sieht."

"Es wird ihr klar, --- dass sie das Rechte aus unrechten Gründen getan hat."

3. T II 1958. "Meine ganze Tragödie ist darauf basiert, dass in ausserordentlichen Weltlagen die Gottheit unmittelbar in den Gang der Ereignisse eingreift und ungeheure Taten durch Menschen, die sie aus eigenem Antrieb nicht ausführen würden, vollbringen lässt."

"Judith führt die Tat aus, sie führt sie aus auf Gottes Geheiss, aber sie ist sich in dem ungeheuren Moment, der ihr ganzes Ich verwirrt, nur ihrer persönlichen Gründe bewusst. --- Das Schwanken und Zweifeln, worin sie nach ihrer Tat versinkt, konnte sie allein zur tragischen Heldin machen, auch können und dürfen solche Zweifel gar nicht ausbleiben, da der Mensch selbst in den Armen eines Gottes nicht aufhört, Mensch zu sein, und da er, sobald der Gott ihn los lässt, augenblicklich in die rein menschlichen Verhältnisse zurücktritt und nun von dem Unbegreiflichen, was von ihm ausgegangen ist, erbebt, ja erstarrt."

4. T II 2698.

5. T II 2212.

Judith makes her suitable as a heroine of tragedy, and emphasises (in the same essay¹) how inextricably, in man, conscious and unconscious motives are bound up together. Hebbel cannot use the Judith of the Bible for his tragedy,² because in tragedy "acts such as hers can be the result only of exaltation which later feels itself punished through itself". Judith "does right on wrong grounds". Hebbel's whole tragedy is based, he writes,³ on the idea that God acts through men, making them act in a way in which unaided they would not. Judith carries out her action at God's behest but at the same time is conscious only of her own motives when once the deed is done. The state of uncertainty and doubt into which she falls after her action makes her, in Hebbel's opinion, a tragic heroine. This is the kind of motive which Hebbel praises in drama,⁴ one which appears to be leading towards a definite end and then suddenly reaches another, one previously unthought-of and unpredicted. Such a double stroke or flash should be attempted, however, only by the genius. "For drama, actions which like shots go straight ahead are unsuitable".⁵ The explanation of this is in the constant evolution of the characters. "The characters of drama/

1. T III 4119.

2. T III 4271.

"Woher springt das Lebendige der echten Charaktere im Drama und in der Kunst überhaupt? Daher, dass der Dichter in jeder ihrer Ausserungen ihre Atmosphäre wiederzuspiegeln weiss, die geistige, wie die leibliche, den Ideenkreis, wie Volk und Land, Stand und Rang, dem sie angehören. Daraus geht die wunderbare Farbenbrechung hervor, die jedes Allgemeine als ein Besonderes, jedes Bekannte als ein Unbekanntes erscheinen lässt und eben den Reiz erzeugt."

3. Herder. Bd. V, pp. 208-231, in particular p. 221.

drama are treated with the greatest art when the actions are the direct outcome of their nature and when the mutual misapprehensions result from mutual errors as to their constitution and their essential qualities." Hebbel finds an instance of this treatment of character in the Joseph of "Herodes und Mariamne".¹

If truly alive, such characters will reflect their world, all the relations in which they stand to others, with every act and word, thereby letting us see general attributes as particular qualities, putting a whole age of thought before us.² It was this power of reflecting their world which Herder in the Shakespeare-essay saw and praised, in particular in "Lear" and "Othello".³ True characters, in Hebbel's view, will reveal their nature in their actions and words to others. Dramatic characters cannot be explained with reference only to themselves; their explanation must be sought in the work. They therefore should not need to have introspective monologues put into their mouths to explain themselves. The dramatic character does not explain himself; the inter-reaction of two characters explains both. The dramatic poet must be careful - Hebbel knew that he in/

1. T I 1062. "Wenn der Dichter Charaktere dadurch zu zeichnen sucht, dass er sie selbst sprechen lässt, so muss er sich hüten, sie über ihr eigenes Innere sprechen zu lassen. Alle ihre Aeusserungen müssen sich auf etwas Aeusseres beziehen; denn nur dann spricht sich ihr Inneres farbig und kräftig aus, denn es gestaltet sich nur in den Reflexen der Welt und des Lebens."

& s. T III 5042.

2. T II 2971. "Monologe im Drama sind nur dann statt-
haft, wenn im Individuum^{der} Dualismus hervortritt, so dass die zwei Personen, die sonst immer zugleich auf der Bühne sein sollen, in seiner Brust ihr Wesen zu treiben scheinen."

in particular, because of his tendency to over-develop character, must be specially careful - "not to let the character directly through speech reveal his nature. All his expressions must have reference to something exterior to himself. Only when his nature manifests itself in his reactions to the world and to life does he reveal himself truly".¹ Monologues, Hebbel had written in 1843,² are only then permissible in drama when the dualism within the single character is made manifest and the two persons within him are differentiated. The monologue then becomes more accurately a dialogue, emphasising the dualism inherent in all men. In this sense it is for Hebbel a revelation of character.

The tragic character must then in Hebbel's view be strong, notable - for the most "moving" tragedy he must even be "good" in the ordinary sense - and at once a particular individual and the representative of his surroundings and his age, capable of a "general" interpretation. All the characters in a drama must be grouped together round a central idea. For the presentation of character Hebbel makes the demand that the characters should be shown in continual evolution and development and that their actions should/

should be the result of their nature and not of outward circumstances. He therefore condemns introspective monologues and insists that the character must be revealed through action and reaction.

1. J. Körner. Preussische Jahrbücher 225, should
June-September 1931, p. 179^{ff}.
word circumstances. He therefore contains information
five paragraphs and inserts that the character was
be revealed through action and reaction.

"RECONCILIATION"

The question whether the element of reconciliation of the tragic conflict is necessary or desirable in drama has been much discussed. In German literature it arises particularly in the discussion of Schiller's works. Some modern critics (for example Joseph Körner in his essay "Tragik und Tragödie"¹) deny the name tragic to most of Schiller's dramas because they end on a comforting note, with a "feeling of sublime pleasure at the triumph of the good and the great"; this is something very different from the metaphysical disharmony which seems to Körner to be essential to Greek tragedy. In stating the fact of human freedom as a postulate, Schiller - in Körner's opinion - eliminates the tragic from tragedy. Schiller's dramas are for Körner not tragedies but "theodicies" in the Leibnizian sense. In a tragic happening, according to Körner, chaos breaks in on the ordered cosmos in the shape of unjustified, undeserved, contra-ethical suffering, and man's trust in Providence is shaken. Man is shown as the plaything of a power which he does not understand. Schiller's works remind one rather of "man's unconquerable/

unconquerable mind" and will, as earlier Christian tragedies had held out the prospect of rewards in Heaven for its martyrs, or had represented suffering as part of the purpose of Providence for the moral purification of man. For Körner, monotheistic religion with its conception of one all-powerful Deity is in direct contradiction to the tragic. The general question arises, then, whether a tragedy ceases to be tragic, in spite of the suffering which it depicts, if the sting of death is removed through the thought of a just Providence which rules over what is apparently chance. Hebbel's answer to this question is worth consideration.

As has been seen, Hebbel believes in the inevitability of suffering. But he finds comfort in the thought of the necessity of this suffering for the advance of the Idea. If this notion is made too explicit in his tragedies they too will have their sting removed.

Drama is concerned, for Hebbel, with portraying the process of life; and, as has been seen, life is in Hebbel's view a conflict between the individual and the universe. There can therefore be no question of reconciliation of this conflict within the scope of the drama/

1. Br. V 55¹⁴.
2. W XII 3²⁴. "--- das bedenkliche Verhältniss".
3. T II 2578. "Es gibt keine Versöhnung; die Helden stürzen, weil sie sich überheben."
4. W XII 52³⁰. "--- alles Handeln löst sich dem Schicksal, d. h. dem Weltwillen gegenüber in ein Leiden auf."
5. W XII 13³⁰-14¹³. "Eine Judith, die sich nicht persönlich aufopfert, ist keine Judith mehr, sondern eine Charlotte Corday, -- ist alles, nur keine tragische Heldin. Die Judith der Bibel ist eben nichts, als eine Charlotte Corday; --- erst meine Erfindung, erst die furchtbare Situation am Schluss, -- hat sie in den tragischen Kreis erhoben."
6. T II 2664. "Das Leben ist der grosse Strom, die Individualitäten sind Tropfen, die tragischen aber Eisstücke, die zerschmolzen werden müssen."
& s. " VI 298¹¹⁹. "Das abgeschiedene Kind an seine Mutter."
7. T II 2776. "Es ist törricht, von dem Dichter das zu verlangen, was Gott selbst nicht darbietet, Versöhnung und Ausgleichung der Dissonanzen. Aber allerdings kann man fordern, dass er die Dissonanzen selbst gebe, und nicht in der Mitte zwischen dem Zufälligen und dem Notwendigen stehen bleibe. So darf er jeden Charakter zugrunde gehen lassen, aber er muss uns zugleich zeigen, dass er, wie der Tod, mit der Geburt selbst gesetzt ist. -- Von diesem Gesichtspunkt aus ergibt sich aber auch eine viel höhere Schönheit und ein ganz anderer, zumteil umgekehrter Weg, ihr zu genügen, als diejenige war, die Goethe anbetete."

drama,¹ which is concerned with life as individuation, that is, as "guilt" in the sense which Hebbel gives to the word. Drama, dealing as it does with the "critical relation"² in which the individual stands to the universal, must be concerned with his suffering. The heroes must fall, for they have risen above their sphere;³ there is for Hebbel no reconciliation in the usual sense of the word as dramatic critics use it. Drama deals, then, with individual suffering; in particular, in tragedy, "all action resolves itself into suffering when brought up against fate, that is, the universal will".⁴ Judith is exalted through her suffering alone into the tragic sphere.⁵ To Hebbel, as we have seen when considering his general philosophy, individuals are like drops in the great stream of life; and heroes in particular are like blocks of ice which must be broken up so that the stream may flow on smoothly.⁶ If there is any reconciliation in tragedy it must not be brought about in the interests of the individual.

Indeed, the destruction of the individual must follow directly, as has been noted, from his creation as an individual, from his individual character.⁷ It is foolish, Hebbel adds, to expect from the poet what God/

1. T II 2632. "Nur solange wir nicht sind, was wir sein sollen, sind wir etwas Besonderes, wie die Schneeflocke nur darum Schneeflocke, weil sie noch nicht ganz Wasser ist."

& s. T II 2633.

"Wir Menschen sind gefrorne Gottgedanken,
Die inn're Glut, von Gott uns eingehaucht,
Kämpft mit dem Frost, der uns als Leib umgibt,
Sie schmilzt ihn oder wird von ihm erstickt -
In beiden Fällen stirbt der Mensch!"

& s. W VI 296f. "Das abgeschiedene Kind an seine Mutter."

2. W XII 42¹⁵. "--- dass er im "Faust", als er zwischen einer ungeheuren Perspektive und einem mit Katechismusfiguren bemalten Bretterverschlag wählen sollte, den Bretterverschlag vorzog und die Geburtswehen der um eine neue Form ringende Menschheit, die wir mit Recht im ersten Teil erblickten, im zweiten zu blossen Krankheitsmomenten eines später durch einen willkürlichen, nur notdürftig-psychologisch vermittelten Akt kurierten Individuums herabsetzte, das ging aus seiner ganz eigen komplizierten Individualität hervor."

3. T II 2972. "Versöhnung in der Tragödie - darunter verstehen die meisten, dass die kämpfenden Potenzen sich erst miteinander schlagen, dann aber miteinander tanzen sollen."

God himself does not give, resolution and harmonising of the dissonances of life. And if the characters thus represent dissonances, they must undergo a change before there can be any question of a final harmony; they must leave their individual form, and through suffering and "death" (of the individual) take on that of the Idea.¹ Mere change of circumstance is insufficient; the individuals cannot be "saved" and preserved as individuals. This conviction is at the root of Hebbel's criticism of the second part of "Faust".² Here Goethe, in Hebbel's view, had seized on a possibility of escape for his hero, and by "saving" him (as an individual) had robbed him of the "general" symbolic significance which is necessary to the true character of drama as Hebbel understands it. Hebbel insists that reconciliation must not fall within the scope of the particular ^{drama}, and ridicules the ordinary conception of reconciliation in tragedy, which represents the warring powers as "first fighting and then, as it were, dancing with each other".³

From the point of view, then, of mankind, limited as man is by the individual nature of his thought, life is a terrible and incomprehensible necessity which must be accepted on trust; tragedy is, in Hebbel's/

1. T II 2721. "Wenn die epische und die lyrische Poesie auch hin und wieder mit den bunten Blasen der Erscheinung spielen dürfen, so hat die dramatische durchaus die Grundverhältnisse, innerhalb derer alles vereinzelter Dasein entsteht und vergeht, ins Auge zu fassen, und die sind bei dem beschränkten Gesichtskreis des Menschen grauenhaft."
2. T II 3105. "'Es ist doch eine Versöhnung, wenn im Drama die Bösen zu Grunde gehen'. Nun ja, in dem Sinn, worin der Galgen ein Versöhnungspfehl ist."
3. W XI 56⁴. "Die Kunst ist die realisierte Philosophie, wie die Welt die realisierte Idee."
4. W XI 43¹⁵. "Der Mensch dieses Jahrhunderts will nicht, wie man ihm schuld gibt, neue und unerhörte Institutionen, er will nur ein besseres Fundament für die schon vorhandenen, er will, dass sie sich auf nichts, als auf Sittlichkeit und Notwendigkeit, die identisch sind, stützen, und also den äusseren Haken, an dem sie bis jetzt zum Teil befestigt waren, gegen den inneren Schwerpunkt, aus dem sie sich vollständig ableiten lassen, vertauschen sollen. Dies ist nach meiner Ueberzeugung der welthistorische Prozess, der in unseren Tagen vor sich geht, die Philosophie --- hat ihn, zersetzend und auflösend, vorbereitet, und die dramatische Kunst --- soll ihn beendigen helfen."
- 5, 6 & 7. W XI 29¹⁰. "Kunst und Philosophie haben eine und dieselbe Aufgabe, aber sie suchen sie auf verschiedene Weise zu lösen. Wenn die Philosophie sich bemüht, die Idee unmittelbar zu erfassen, so bescheidet die Kunst sich, alles, was ihr in der Erscheinungswelt widerspricht, zu vernichten. Die Philosophie hat ihrem Teil der gemeinschaftlichen Aufgabe noch nicht genügt, sie hat die Peripherie um das mysteriöse Zentrum enger und enger zusammengezogen, aber der Sprung von der Peripherie ins Zentrum hinein ist noch nicht geglückt, denn die Vereinselung ist noch nicht auf über innere Notwendigkeit zurückgeführt./

Hebbel's opinion, the only form of art which grows out of such a view of things and is concerned with the fundamental principles governing the existence of the individual. From man's point of view, his relation to the universal is a terrible one.¹ The mere fact, then, of the downfall of the wicked in drama is as little reconciling to one's feelings as the gallows are in everyday life.² So Hebbel rejects any idea of a moral reconciliation in the interests of the individual.

There is however a reconciliation of a different sort, one which falls outside the sphere of the particular drama. As one might expect from Hebbel's conception of the meaning of life, the reconciliation is a metaphysical one in the interests of the Idea. The world is for Hebbel the "realised Idea"; and in the same way he speaks of art, which portrays the process of life, as "realised philosophy".³ In Hebbel's view art (and in particular drama as the highest form of art) has in his own day "realised" philosophy by pointing out the "Idea" peculiar to his own age, the dependence of all human institutions on morality and necessity, which are identical.⁴ Art has "freed the Idea from its imperfect form"⁵ and has thus/

zurückgeführt. Die Kunst dagegen hat ihr Geschäft bei Alten und Neueren noch stets zur rechten Zeit vollbracht, sie hat die Vereinzelung durch die ihr eingepflanzte Masslosigkeit selbst wieder aufzulösen und die Idee von ihrer mangelhaften Form zu befreien gewusst. In der Masslosigkeit liegt die Schuld, zugleich aber auch, da das Vereinzelte nur darum masslos ist, weil es, als unvollkommen, keinen Anspruch auf Dauer hat und deshalb auf seine eigene Zerstörung hinarbeiten muss, die Versöhnung, soweit im Kreise der Kunst danach gefragt werden kann."

8. T II 3158. "Der Begriff der tragischen Versöhnung (ist) nur aus der Masslosigkeit, die, da sie sich in der Erscheinung nicht aufheben kann, diese selbst aufhebt, indem sie sie zerstört und so die Idee wieder von ihrer mangelhaften Form befreit, zu entwickeln."

thus completed the development of thought led up to by philosophy. It has accomplished this task by "reducing the fact of individuation to its essential necessity."⁶ Art achieves its end by destroying in the world of reality everything that is at variance with the Idea; --- in the case of drama the hero, who as a particularly strong character is in conflict with the universal will, is therefore inevitably destroyed. In the hero's individual energy (which necessarily manifests itself as a "lack of proportion,"⁷ an exceeding of the limits) lies his guilt and at the same time a kind of reconciliation, because "the hero is only at variance with the universal because he, an imperfect part of the whole, is finite and therefore must be working towards his own destruction". This is the reconciliation which Hebbel sees in drama.⁸

The individual is shown to be necessary for the working out of the Idea in the world of reality; and his destruction is at the same time shown to be the result of his own "individual" nature.

The necessary character of the suffering that results from individuation may be not merely brought home to the readers or the audience in the general tone of the drama. The hero himself may be shown as conscious of it. Whether this was desirable or not was/

1. W XI 31²⁴. "Das höchste, was das Drama erreicht, ist die Satisfaktion, die es der Idee durch den Untergang des ihr durch sein Handeln oder durch sein Dasein selbst widerstrebenden Individuums verschafft, eine Satisfaktion, die bald unvollständig ist, indem das Individuum trotzig und in sich verbissen untergeht und dadurch im voraus verkündigt, dass es an einem anderen Punkt im Weltall abermals kämpfend hervortreten wird, bald vollständig, indem das Individuum im Untergang selbst eine geläutertere Anschauung seines Verhältnisses zum Ganzen gewinnt und in Frieden abtritt."
2. T II 2664. "Die Versöhnung im Tragischen geschieht im Interesse der Gesamtheit, nicht in dem des Einzelnen, des Helden, und es ist gar nicht nötig, obgleich besser, dass er sich selbst ihrer bewusst wird."
3. Br. V 55⁸ f. "Zunächst sind in meiner Dichterlaufbahn zwei Perioden wohl zu unterscheiden. Die erste geht von der Judith bis zum Herodes; in ihr habe ich das Licht gewiss auch gemalt, aber allerdings meistens durch den Schatten, und man kann die Werke derselben versöhnungslos finden, wenn man, freilich mit Unrecht, durchaus verlangt, dass die Versöhnung unmittelbar in den Kreis des Dramas hineinfallen soll. Die zweite beginnt mit dem Herodes ---. Den hierher gehörigen Werken wird niemand die Versöhnung absprechen können, wenn er anders mit der in der Tragödie überhaupt möglichen zufrieden ist, und nicht fordert, dass die Konflikte, die im allgemeinen zur Ausgleichung gebracht werden, auch in den Individuen, welche sie vertreten, zur Ausgleichung kommen sollen; dies hiesse natürlich die Individuen umbringen und auflösen, also den Grund des Dramas zerstören. --- In der Genoveva gelangt Golo gewiss durch die Sünde selbst, auf dem Wege durch Blut und Frevel, zu einem Punkt, auf dem er viel reiner, sittlicher und geläuteter dasteht, wie am Anfang, wo er sich in ungeprüfter Tugend wiegt, aber aus der durch ihn zertrümmerten Welt steigt die neue, welche darin schlummerte, nicht mehr sichtbar hervor; im Herodes geschiehts, die heiligen drei Könige treten auf und tauchen alle Gräber in Morgenrot."

was a point much discussed by Hebbel. In his dramatic practice, Hebbel tended more and more as he grew older, and as his own view of life matured and mellowed, to introduce a "reconciliation" of this type in the person of a character conscious of the end attained by the sacrifice of individual existence. "That satisfaction," writes Hebbel, "which drama affords to the Idea through the destruction of the individual at variance with it either through his actions or his mere existence, is complete when the individual gains an insight into his true relation to the whole and withdraws in peace."¹ It is better that the hero should become aware of the reconciliation which is in the interests not of himself but of the whole.²

Hebbel groups his own works as belonging to two periods,³ the difference between them being that, in the second but not in the first, he has given the audience a visible impression of the "reconciliation of the Idea", in the shape of a character or group of characters. In the first period, which ends before "Herodes und Mariamne", Hebbel writes that he has "painted light chiefly by means of shadow", and that a superficial criticism might indeed term his dramas lacking in any impression of reconciliation. The/

1. Walzel (115): "Hebbel hat Personen, die auf einem kulturell niederen, und solche, die auf einem kulturell höheren Standpunkt stehen; endlich eine Gruppe oder eine Gestalt, die auf Verbindung, Versöhnung und Ueberholung der in den beiden gegensätzlichen Parteien waltenden Weltanschauung hindeutet."
2. Br. V 56⁷.
3. Zinkernagel, 66-7: "Stand im Mittelpunkt seines Pessimismus der Gedanke von der Ohnmacht des menschlichen Willens als treibendes Motiv, um das sich die Welt seiner Gedanken kristallisierte, so begann er jetzt die Lehre von der immer mehr erstarkenden Herrschaft des menschlichen Bewusstseins als neues leitendes Prinzip aufzustellen."
4. W XI 323¹⁰. "Die sittliche Läuterung und Verklärung des Helden."

The second period includes "Herodes" and all the later works (except the "Trauerspiel in Sizilien", which Hebbel regards as a unique experiment) and in it the new world which had lain dormant within the old state of things and has been awakened to life through the destruction of the previous order, takes on visible form.¹ In "Herodes", for instance, the three Kings of the East appear and "light up all the graves with the red flush of sunrise".² The difference between the two periods is one of style, not an indication of any fundamental change in Hebbel's conception of the tragic.³ In each case there is, through the moral purification of the hero, a feeling of reconciliation in the general tone of the drama. In the works of the second period there is, in addition to this, a definite note of reconciliation struck at the close of the work itself. This of course does not in any way affect the "fate" of the hero as an individual. Hebbel sees in tragedy, as we have seen, "the ethical transfiguration and purification of a notable individual".⁴ Such transfiguration must necessarily entail the destruction of the individual whose separate existence consists in a struggle against the universe.

There/

1, 2 W XI 315. Professor Heiberg bemerkt gegen mich,
& 3. dass ich bei meiner Auffassung des Dramas des
Ziel desselben in eine Dissonanz setze, indem
ich die Schuld unaufgehoben stehen lasse."

"Das Drama, wie ich es konstruiere,
schliesst keineswegs mit der Dissonanz, denn
es löst die dualistische Form des Seins, so-
bald sie zu schneidend hervortritt, durch
sich selbst wieder auf. --- Aber es lässt
allerdings eine Dissonanz unerledigt, und
zwar die ursprüngliche Dissonanz, die es von
Anfang an übergang, indem es die Vereinze-
lung, ohne nach der 'cause prima' zu forschen,
als mit oder ohne Kreation unmittelbar
gegebenes Faktum hinnahm, es lässt daher nicht
die Schuld unaufgehoben, wohl aber den inneren
Grund der Schuld unenthüllt. Doch dies ist
die Seite, wo das Drama sich mit dem Weltmys-
terium in eine und dieselbe Nacht verliert."

& s. W XI 32². "Warum musste der Riss geschehen?
Hierauf habe ich sie eine Antwort gefunden,
und Keiner wird sie finden, der ernstlich
frägt."

4. T II 3031. "Die Welt ist Gottes Sündenfall."

5. T II 3158. "Allerdings bleibt die ursprüngliche
& s. W XI 3117. Inkongruenz zwischen Idee und
Erscheinung unbeseitigt und uner-
ledigt, aber es ist einleuchtend, dass im
Kreise des Lebens, den die Kunst, solange sie
sich selbst versteht, nie überschreiten wird,
nichts abgetan werden kann, was ausserhalb
dieses Kreises liegt, und dass sie ihr
höchstes Ziel erreicht, wenn sie gleich die
nächste Konsequenz dieser Inkongruenz, die
Masslosigkeit, ergreift und in ihr das
Sichselbstaufhebungsmoment aufzeigt, die
Inkongruenz selbst aber, die sich in der
Nacht der Kreation verliert, als unmittel-
bar gegebenes Faktum auf sich beruhen lässt."

There is then for Hebbel a supra-individual reconciliation in drama which "resolves the dualistic form of reality through itself",¹ when this appears in too acute a shape, that is, at a time of crisis in the history of the Idea. The duality within the Idea at such times is portrayed, in drama, in characters representative of the outlook of their age. By this means the Idea is freed from its imperfect manifestation and "guilt" is thus overcome, for the "guilt" is identical with the act of individuation, and the individual is sacrificed in tragedy to the universal. For this reason, Hebbel considers Heiberg's criticism, that Hebbel's drama aims at nothing beyond a dissonance, to be unjust.² The dualism gives place to unity; but the reason for the dualism remains for Hebbel "the mystery of the world"³ which he had described as "God's fall from grace".⁴ The reason for the guilt of individuation remains in art as in life an unsolved problem⁵ although the guilt itself is overcome. Hebbel had often asked himself the reason of this guilt, but he came in the end to the realisation that this mystery could not be solved by any human (and consequently "individual") intelligence. And in "Mein Wort über das Drama" Hebbel expressly/

1. W XI 34¹¹. "Eben mit der unmittelbar im Leben aufgehenden, wenn auch in der Form des Widerspruchs hervortretenden, nimmermehr jedoch mit der eigentlich spekulativen Seite der Idee hat es die dramatische Kunst zu tun."

2. T II 2845. "Versöhnung im Drama: Heilung der Wunde durch den Nachweis, dass sie für die erhöhte Gesundheit notwendig war."

expressly states that drama, as a work of art, has nothing to do with this speculative side of the Idea.¹ Reconciliation in drama lies in the demonstration of the necessity of suffering (in a higher cause) and has nothing to do with the reason for this necessity. It is described by Hebbel in his diary for 1843 as "the healing of a wound through the demonstration of the necessity of it for the greater health of the organism".²

1. W XI 63²⁵. "Es ist an und für sich gleichgültig, ob der Zeiger der Uhr von Gold oder von Messing ist, und es kommt nicht darauf an, ob eine in sich bedeutende, d. h. symbolische Handlung sich in einer niederen, oder einer gesellschaftlich höheren Sphäre ereignet."

2. W XI 62³⁰.

HEBBEL'S VIEWS ON OTHER 'GENRES'.I. DOMESTIC DRAMA.

Ever since the days of "Miss Sara Sampson" there had been a constant attempt to create in German literature examples of the genre "domestic drama". Particularly in the nineteenth century, during which the middle classes, as well as and perhaps more than the others, were becoming increasingly conscious of themselves as an entity, the attempts to create "domestic dramas" had become more frequent. Hebbel in the "Preface to Maria Magdalena" deals with the whole question of the nature of domestic drama, and links this genre up with his theory of other types of drama.

As might be expected from what has gone before, one finds that Hebbel insists on the symbolic nature of all "notable" action - that is, of all action suitable for serious drama. The drama itself, in Hebbel's imagery, is the hand of a clock, marking the stage in the development of the Idea, and the hand may equally well be of brass or of gold.¹ To have a tragic fate, one needs nothing more than to be a man.² But a man in drama must be not merely an individual but/

1. W XI 63²⁹.

"Wenn in der heroischen Tragödie die Schwere des Stoffs --- bis auf einen gewissen Grad für die Mängel der tragischen Form entschädigt, so hängt im bürgerlichen Trauerspiel alles davon ab, ob der Ring der tragischen Form geschlossen, d. h. ob der Punkt erreicht wurde, wo uns einesteils nicht mehr die kümmerliche Teilnahme an dem Einzelgeschick einer von dem Dichter willkürlich aufgegriffenen Person zugemutet, sondern dieses in ein allgemein menschliches, wenn auch nur in exträmen Fällen so schneidend hervortretendes aufgelöst wird, und wo uns anderenteils neben dem --- Resultat des Kampfes, zugleich auch die Notwendigkeit, es gerade auf diesem und keinem anderen Wege zu erreichen, entgegentritt."

but the symbol of an aspect of the Idea in evolution. Hebbel considered "Maria Magdalena" particularly suitable in theme for the symbolic presentation of his own day. From the point of view of symbolisation, the "domestic" is the most difficult form of tragedy. In heroic tragedy, a certain amount of dignity and significance arises from the importance of the theme itself and the lofty treatment suitable to it; but in domestic tragedy everything depends on the perfection of the "tragic form", that is, on the symbolic significance of the characters and the recognised inevitability of the course and the result of the struggle. In other words, the spectator or reader must be conscious not merely of the sufferings of an individual but of the representation in an extreme case of the fate of every notable individual; and besides the inevitable catastrophe rounding off the work, the "motivation" of the tragedy (which caused Hebbel so much thought in the case of his own domestic tragedy, "Maria Magdalena") must be perfect.¹ It is a significant fact that Hebbel found in the treatment of the Ottilie of the "Wahlverwandtschaften" the perfect example of this kind of motivation; and the "Wahlverwandtschaften" is a work dealing with the theme/

1. W XI 41¹²

2. W XI 62³

But the symbol of an aspect of the idea...
 Hebel, however, "Maria Magdalena" is...
 and calls for the symbolic presentation of...
 his own day, and the point of view of symbolism...
 the "domestic" is the most difficult form of tragedy...
 in terms of tragedy, a certain amount of dignity and...
 significance arises from the importance of the theme...
 itself and the lofty treatment suitable to it; but...
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 tion of the "tragic form", that is, on the symbolic...
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 the Ocellus of the "Wahlverwandtschaften" the perfect...
 example of this kind of motivation; and the...
 "Wahlverwandtschaften" is a work dealing with the

theme of many domestic tragedies and had been called "dramatic" by Hebbel.¹

Hebbel levels two main criticisms against the writers of domestic tragedy in general and particularly his own contemporaries in Germany.² One is that the characters in domestic tragedy are not symbolical in the sense outlined above. Instead of deriving the catastrophe from the tragic nature of a man whose actions are necessary to the working-out of the Idea and yet, once committed, are an offence against it in its new form - instead, in a word, of dealing with essentials, the writers of domestic tragedy concern themselves with fortuitous attributes of the characters, with lack of means, with sordid circumstances, with the clash of one class with another. Hebbel insists that such situations as these are pathetic but not tragic, for they are not in themselves inevitable. They may have a good moral influence, but they are not art. "When one can console oneself with saying: 'If he had only had thirty dollars' or: 'If she had only been a young lady', the impression becomes trivial instead of shattering. The sole result, if indeed there is any, is that the next day the spectators display more willingness than usual to/

1. W XI 62⁵. "man hat das bürgerliche Trauerspiel nicht aus seinen inneren, ihm eigenen Elementen, aus der schroffen Geschlossenheit, womit die aller Dialektik unfähigen Individuen sich in dem beschränktesten Kreis gegenüberstehen, und aus der hieraus entspringenden schrecklichen Gebundenheit des Lebens in der Einseitigkeit aufgebaut, sondern es aus allerlei Ausserlichkeiten --- zusammengeflickt. Daraus geht nun unleugbar viel Trauriges, aber nichts Tragisches hervor, denn das Tragische muss als ein von vornherein mit Notwendigkeit Bedingtes, als ein, wie der Tod, mit dem Leben selbst Gesetztes und garnicht zu Umgehendes auftreten; sobald man sich mit einem: Hätte er (dreissig Taler gehabt ---) oder einem: Wäre sie (ein Fräulein gewesen u. s. w.) helfen kann, wird der Eindruck, der erschüttern soll, trivial, und die Wirkung, wenn sie nicht ganz verpufft, besteht darin, dass die Zuschauer am nächsten Tag mit grösserer Bereitwilligkeit, wie sonst, ihre Armensteuer bezahlen oder ihre Töchter nachsichtiger behandeln, dafür haben sich die resp. Armenvorsteher und Töchter zu bedanken, nicht die dramatische Kunst."

2. W XI 126³¹.

3. W XI 62²⁸.

4. T IV 5328.

to pay the poor-tax or to treat their daughters with more consideration. The poor-law guardians and daughters respectively may be grateful for this result, but not dramatic art."¹ Given other circumstances and the same characters, the tragedy could have been avoided, would never indeed have arisen. (As early as 1839 Hebbel had touched on this point in a criticism of Lenz' work.²) True domestic tragedy arises only from the opposition within the same sphere of life of individuals incapable of all dialectic, and from the resulting presentation of the partial nature of all human judgements and standpoints. Only if domestic tragedy adheres to these, the laws of its existence, can it hold its own with other genres.³

The second point upon which Hebbel found fault with the work of his contemporaries was one of style,⁴ and is treated here in the chapter devoted to that subject. The speech of ordinary people gave place, in most domestic tragedy, Hebbel found, to so-called "poetic diction" or inarticulate ejaculation. (And if one compares the language which Hebbel puts into the mouths of the characters in "Maria Magdalena" with the diction of his contemporaries, one appreciates the pains he took to make the language of his characters suitable/

1. T III 4276.
2. T III 3874¹³⁰.
3. W XI 56²¹.

suitable to their station and outlook.) "A character should never speak or act outside the scope of his own world",¹ wrote Hebbel in 1854. For the same reasons he was opposed to the use of verse in domestic tragedy.²

Although Hebbel wrote one domestic tragedy symbolising the evolution of the Idea at the stage of development which it had reached in his own day, he found that history afforded him the best symbols for his work. The experiment of "Maria Magdalena" was not repeated, as one does not consider "Julia" as in this sense the "continuation of 'Maria Magdalena'."

II. COMEDY.

Hebbel's conception of comedy was one based on his theory of tragedy. He failed fully to appreciate comedy because he applied to it his standards of tragedy and judged it largely by its significance along the lines of his criticism of tragedy.

At first Hebbel excluded comedy from drama altogether;³ and because (as has been noted in the general remarks on comedy made in the first chapter) it had no cosmic significance for him, as tragedy had, he called it the "negation of nature", concerned as it was with the/

1. T I 99 & T I 103.
& s. T II 2393. "--- das Individuelle, welches eigentlicher Stoff der Komödie sein sollte."
& W VI 358. "Die moderne Komödie".
2. Hegel. Esthetics, III, p.562.
3. W XI 57²³. "Nur diejenige Verzerrung der Natur kann komisch sein, deren Abweichungen Konsistenz in sich haben."
4. T I 117. "Nicht, was wesentlich der menschlichen Natur entspricht, sondern was ihr scheinbar widerspricht, gehört ins Lustspiel. (Börne)."
& s T I 1176. "Das echt Komische ist wahr, d. h. auf die Natur gegründet, und doch kann man sich in der Natur keine Gesetze, keine Bedingungen denken, die es hervorrufen und möglich machen. Hierin liegt das Pikante des Eindrucks, den es macht."
5. "Barbier Zitterlein": 1835.
"Nepomuk Schlägel", "Der Rubin", & "Schnock": 1837.
"Matteo": 1839-41.
6. W X 383⁵.
7. T I 1207. "Man nehme das Komische, woher man wolle, nur nicht aus der Natur und ihren grossen Verhältnissen. Müsste man an der Würde und Wahrheit des Weltfundaments zweifeln, so müsste man untergehen. Dies Komische höbe sich mithin selbst auf."
8. T I 1471⁵⁸.

the individual as such.¹ (This conception of comedy as concerned with the isolated individual without reference to his place and function in the universe is found in Hegel's "Esthetics", with which Hebbel was later to become familiar.²) The comic, as distinct from the merely ridiculous, must however have some consistency.³ It apparently contradicts nature, while opening in reality, for those who can see through it, a window into a world of greater significance.⁴ Here Hebbel seems to have been trying to read the "significance" of tragedy into comedy. He was less concerned, as has been pointed out, with the comic itself than with the "meaning" or "purpose" of comedy. It is important to note that Hebbel's first works concerned with the comic were in narrative, not in dramatic form,⁵ and that his linking up of comedy with his theory of tragic drama was apparently an afterthought.

Comedy, then, as has been noted, is "void in theme";⁶ it must not, therefore, concern itself with the "greatest relationships",⁷ (that is, with those of the individual to the universal) and for this reason even chance can take its place as an element in comedy.⁸ For if comedy were to concern itself with fundamentals, /

1. W XI 417¹⁰. "Alle Kunst ist Notwehr des Menschen gegen die Idee. --- Allein, wenn die positive Kunst den Abgrund, der das Wirkliche von dem Möglichen scheidet, zu überfliegen sucht, so stürzt der Humor, als der Negative, sich in diesen Abgrund hinunter, und hierin liegt so viel Verzweiflung, aber nicht so viel Trost, wie in der erschütterndster Tragik."

& s. Hegel. Esthetics, III, 561.

& Schlegel. Vorlesungen, I 131 ff.

2. T II 2635, "--- die schwere und der Komödie allein würdige Aufgabe, dass für die dargestellten Personen alles bitterster Ernst ist, was sich für den Zuschauer, der von aussen in die künstliche Welt hineinblickt, in Schein auflöst."

3. T IV 5858.

& s. T III 4814. "Falstaff setzt die Konsequenzen seiner Weltanschauung mit dem höchsten Ernste durch."

4. T II 2712 & Prolog zum "Diamant", W V 411-432.

& T I 1411. "Ein komischer Charakter wird nicht durch eine Reihe von lustigen Einfällen, die man ihn aushecken lässt, gezeichnet."

5. T III 4622.

6. W X 383⁵.

7. T I 1248.

fundamentals, it would be more tragic than tragedy itself.¹ The reason for this is plain. If it were related to the fundamental connection between the individual and the universal, comedy, lacking as it does any cosmic significance, would lack also the reconciliation which lies in the conviction that necessity has an ethical quality. The significance of comedy lies in the way in which it is considered. Here Hebbel, especially in his middle period, approaches the theory of romantic irony. What is bitter earnest for the characters must be a play for the onlooker.² The true comic figure takes himself seriously, like the hunchback who is in love with himself.³ It is for this reason, further, that allusions, destroying as they do the illusion upon which our delight in comedy is based, are out of place.⁴ "The only good joke is the one that reveals nature's joke."⁵

The importance of comedy lies, then, not in its theme, but in the treatment of its material. "It must be perfect in form."⁶ Hebbel had first considered an "irregular, quasi-confused treatment" as the best for comedy.⁷ There is however a limit to this truth, as he realises later; within the scope of his mad/

1. T III 4102. "Der Poet versetze sich durch einen Sprung, wohin er will, nur höre er zu springen auf, sobald er in seiner verrückten Welt angelangt ist, denn nur dies unterscheidet ihn vom Fieberkranken und Wahnsinnigen. --- So leiht Aristophanes den Vögeln menschliche Leidenschaften, aber im übrigen bleiben sie Vögel."
2. T II 2635. "--- die höchste Höhe der Kunst."
& s. W VII 358. "Die moderne Komödie", & W XI 244².
3. T II 2635.
& s. T III 3468. "Die aristophanische Komödie vernichtet in der Form die Form selbst und hebt so nicht bloss die Welt, der sie parodierend gegenübertritt, sondern auch sich selbst auf."
4. T III 4578. "Ein phantastisches Lustspiel."
5. T III 4102. "Eine moderne phantastische Komödie fordert keinen Glauben für ihren Stoff, sie rechnet sogar mit Bestimmtheit darauf, keinen zu finden."
6. W V 17. "Phantastisch-lustig dargestellt."
7. W XI 352¹³. "Die Dinge, die die Natur allerhöchst unmittelbar auf den Kopf gestellt und ihnen die entsprechende Organisation gegeben hat, aus dem krausen Weltlauf herauszufinden und sie trotz ihrer Abnormität auf das allgemeine Gesetz zurückzuführen, dazu gehört ein Meister. Dem 'Zerbrochenen Krug' fehlt nur ein Moment, ihm fehlt nur die Weiterleitung der Spiegelung bis in die höheren und höchsten Sphären hinauf, und er wäre eine vollendete Komödie."

mad world the author of the phantastic comedy must show consistency, as Aristophanes does, for instance, in his comedy of this type.¹ Hebbel much admires the comedy of Aristophanes and compares his own "Diamant" to the other's works, which represent for Hebbel the "highest pitch of art".² In them Aristophanes takes nothing seriously - neither the world of reality, which he parodies, nor the world of his own comedy, which he has created; he "burns altar and sacrifice alike".³ Hebbel evidently turns here to phantastic comedy of the type of "Der Rubin".⁴ It will make no claims on our belief in its theme;⁵ in the prologue to the "Diamant" Hebbel describes the world in his play as "fantastically-comically represented".⁶

In 1850, speaking of Kleist's "Zerbrochener Krug", Hebbel goes so far as to claim symbolical significance as the criterion of the highest comedy, (for this reason denying this title to Kleist's work) which shall "seize from out of the course of the world those things which Nature has turned topsy-turvy and reduce them to a universal law".⁷ Hebbel here seems to have progressed very far from his previous conception of comedy; he appears indeed to have reverted to his former practice of applying the standards of tragedy to comedy/

1. T III 3943⁶⁷. "--- die beste und sicher die eigenartigste meiner Produktionen, eine Komödie, die sich frei und selbständig, wie die Tragödie, dem Universum gegenüberstellt und den Dualismus desselben auf eigene Hand, ohne die Vermittlung dieser gewöhnlich als vorhergehend gedachten Kunstform in Anspruch zu nehmen, zu bewältigen sucht."
2. T III 3474. "In meiner Hand liegt der Stoff zu einer Komödie, wie zu einer Tragödie; ich kann Ohrfeigen damit erteilen, ich kann damit morden!"
& s. T III 3896²¹
& T III 4050.
3. Zu "Demetrios", s. T I 1046 & T II 2231.
Zu "Moloch", s. T III 3755.
4. T III 4085.
5. s. Scheunert, "Symbolik der Tragödie" in "Der Pantragismus als System.--- Fr. Hebbels."

comedy and judging it by these. He sets so high a standard that it is difficult to find an example in literature (except perhaps his own "Diamant", which he calls the best of his works) of the "highest comedy". In the highest comedy, apparently, a theme in itself insignificant is capable of acquiring the highest symbolical significance.

On the relation between tragedy and comedy Hebbel often expresses an opinion. He insists on several occasions that the same material can afford a theme for either tragedy or comedy.² He notes as suitable for treatment in "the highest" comedy themes which he later used in his unfinished tragedy "Demetrios" and in the fragment "Moloch";³ and on other occasions he jots down in his diary themes for treatment in either tragedy or comedy.⁴ The difference lies, as we have seen, in the treatment; in the case of tragedy, inferences are drawn from the facts as to the relation of man to the universal; and in the case of comedy such inferences are not drawn, and one sees merely the figures of a picture without the background. For Hebbel, the tragic lies, as Scheunert expresses it, in the "meaning which we ascribe to things".⁵

In Hebbel's view, then, tragedy and comedy
spring/

1. W X 366¹. "Die Tragödie stellt ein Volk in seinem Verhältnis zu den wichtigsten Aufgaben sowohl seiner selbst, wie der Menschheit überhaupt dar. Die Komödie malt es in seinen notwendigen Verirrungen und Abnormitäten, in seinen erdwärts gekehrten Richtungen und Bestrebungen; nur beide, in ihrer gemeinschaftlichen Ausbildung, in ihrer Erhaltung auf gleicher Höhe, erschöpfen seinen Gesamtinhalt und geben ein treues, ewiges Bild seines Wollens und Könnens, seines Schwankens und Erliegens."
- & s. Solger: "Nachgelassene Schriften", II p. 570.
2. W X 367⁹. "Die Kritik selbst --- schien es nicht zu ahnen, dass Tragödie und Komödie aus einer und derselben Wurzel hervorsprossen, und dass die erstere sich durchaus nicht in ihrer ganzen Grösse entfalten kann, wenn die letztere hinter ihr zurückbleibt."
3. T II 2393.
& s. W V 18.
4. T III 4050.
5. W XII 110²⁰. "Was ist die Komödie und die Tragödie? Genau besehen: zwei Formen für ein und dasselbe Verhältnis, das sie an den entgegengesetzten Enden packen. Immer ist es der Mensch in seinem Konflikt mit den ewigen Mächten, mag man diese nun fassen, wie man will, der dem Drama in beiden Gestalten die Aufgabe stellt, und der ganze Unterschied liegt in der Art der Lösung."
6. T II 2450.
& W XII 110²⁶.
& W XI 273¹⁹.
7. T III 4428.
& T III 4538.

spring from the same root and are complementary; while one depicts a nation in symbolical figures in relation to its tasks and episodes in its development and that of mankind, the other reveals it in all its idiosyncrasies and aberrations.¹ Hebbel considered, too, that tragedy and comedy must develop together if either is to reach its highest pitch.² They are "two forms of the same idea",³ one dealing with the universal as well as the individual and the other with the latter alone. "The highest personages are comic in themselves; but they are tragic, seen as the agents of each other's fate".⁴ Comedy and Tragedy are two forms for the same relationship, which they approach from opposite ends."⁵ (That is, tragedy takes the cosmic, comedy the individual view.) It is the business, as Plato had pointed out, of one man to write both.⁶

Hebbel held that comic elements may be introduced into a tragedy for the sake of contrast, and that this heightens the tragic effect of the whole, at least for those who appreciate drama correctly as a totality.⁷ He makes however very little use of this device in his own works.

As regards the respective worth of tragedy and comedy/

1. T II 2635.

2. " " "

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As regards the respective worth of tragedy and

comedy

comedy Hebbel was not always of the same opinion. In his earlier writings he certainly identifies tragedy with the highest drama (indeed, as we have seen, he began by denying to comedy the title of drama at all); and often, even in his later references, he speaks of drama when clearly he is thinking of tragedy alone. From the realisation that the material is the same for both tragedy and comedy and that they treat the same theme and give expression to the same idea, it follows that the difference must lie in the treatment, as has been seen, and - for Hebbel with his demand for a metaphysical art - in the significance attributable to the theme as treated. Along these lines it was impossible that Hebbel should consider any art as superior to tragedy.

But as an art-form it is possible to regard comedy as supreme. In 1843, when he was first occupied with the "Diamant", Hebbel writes of the great similarity between his ideal and that of Aristophanes.¹ His ideal is at this time "fantastic comedy"; to Aristophanes' works he ascribes perfection of art in so far as this can be attained through perfection of form. Aristophanes "burns altar and sacrifice alike";² Hebbel cannot have been thinking here of the significance/

1. W XI 274⁵. "Wenn die Stufen, die zur echten Tragödie hinaufführen, fast alle bedeutungslos sind, so hat umgekehrt jede Sprosse der Leiter, auf der man zur Komödie emporsteigt, noch ihren Wert und ihr Verdienst. Der Tragödie ist die freie Uebersicht des Weltwesens durchaus unentbehrlich, und die ist nur auf dem höchsten Standpunkt möglich; der Komödie genügt schon eine bestimmte Ansicht desselben, und die ist auch auf einem minder hohen zu erlangen."

2. W XI 353¹¹. "Es leuchtet wohl von selbst ein, dass die Spitze aus dem Gesamtgebäude hervorstechen, und dass die Komödie, die als solche gelten will, alle Elemente der Welt, wie die wahre Tragödie, der sie sich doch zunächst gleichzustellen hat, umfassen, da aber, da sie dieselbe ja übertreffen soll, noch etwas hinzutun muss. Worin besteht nun dies etwas? In dem freieren Ueberblick und der aus diesem entspringenden grösseren Gleichgültigkeit gegen die Einzelercheinungen, die der Tragödie weinend zerbrechen sieht, der Komödie lachend selbst zerbricht!"

& s. T III 3623.

3. T III 3943⁷⁰.

4. Solger: 220. "Es muss einen Standpunkt geben zwischen der Besonderheit der Eindrücke und dem Allgemeinen der Empfindung, auf welchem die Idee nicht bloss als sich aufhebend, sondern als Prinzip der Existenz erscheint und sich mit Bewusstheit aufhebt."

& s. T I 985.

5. W XII 83⁴.

significance of dramatic art. Because comedy is thus dependent on perfection of form, "every rung of the ladder by which one mounts to comedy has its worth and importance",¹ whereas in tragedy the end alone, the "cosmic view" is noteworthy. True comedy is then in this limited sense the highest of all forms of art; it embraces, as tragedy also does, all elements of the world; its superiority lies in the aloofness and indifference arising from the dispassionate survey of individual events.² (Hebbel in this connection states that his opinion coincides with that of Schiller.)

The dualism is "overcome",³ in comedy, by being ignored. Man is taken to be the ultimate unity and is not treated in his relation to the universal. The writer of comedy is then a kind of god amused at the struggles of men. His standpoint is above that of the lyric poet;⁴ (or the writer of tragedy, who, like the lyric poet, identifies himself with his work) he possesses "Humor", as Heine did, who "dashed the bright ball of his world in pieces in order to give a further polish to the fragments".⁵

1. Br. V 109⁷.
2. T III 5163.
3. Br. V 109.
4. Br. VI 196³⁰. "Er (der Text) ist, das Verhältnis der Musik im Auge behaltend, gewiss einer der allervortrefflichsten, aber die Aufgabe des Dramas fängt eben da erst an, wo er aufhört, und zwar im Einzelnen, in jedem Vers, wie im Ganzen, im Gesamt-Organismus."

III. OPERA.

Hebbel's occasional remarks on opera are interesting when taken in connection with the fact that Wagner was developing his theories at the same time. Without accepting Wagner's theories, with which he was familiar, Hebbel admits that he has always envisaged the possibility, in certain special cases, of a merging of Opera and Drama.¹ In particular, he has always thought of "Moloch" in connection with music, for music as an essentially "general" art² suits a "general" theme such as that of "Moloch", which represents the "dawn of civilisation in a barbaric world".³

The implication in this consideration of a merging of Opera and Drama is that Opera can be (and often is) complete without incorporating in its theme a complete "drama"; and certain remarks on the theme of "Lohengrin" strengthen this impression.⁴ The task of drama with regard to the treatment of the theme, writes Hebbel, begins where that of opera leaves off. Opera, unlike serious drama, makes no claim on our belief; it represents a complete break with ordinary dramatic illusion, and motivation unsuitable for drama is permissible for opera, where the theme is auxiliary/

1. T IV 5627.

2. T IV 6099.

3. T IV 6006. "Die Oper ist der entschiedenste Bruch
mit der gemeinen Illusion und wirkt
doch."

auxiliary to the music, as in "Lohengrin". His own opera-text, "Der Steinmetz: oder opferum opfer" certainly answers to this description, but posterity does not think so highly of it as Hebbel did.¹

Later, in his diary, Hebbel refers to Wagner's theory as "absurd",² but emphasises again the difference between Opera and Drama as regards theme. In Hebbel's view, opera should always take its theme from mythology, for here one's belief in the details of an otherwise "unlikely" subject-matter is assured. If every-day subjects are chosen, the artificiality of the whole genre becomes apparent and the unity of illusion is destroyed.³

1. W XI 65-73.
2. W XI 65¹⁸.
3. W XI 66¹¹. "An der Sprache ist es die wunderbarste Seite, wie der allgemeine Geist des Volks, dessen Produkt sie ist, und der individuelle, der sich ihrer zu seinen Einzelzwecken bedient, ineinander wirken und, sich gegenseitig ergänzend und beschränkend, ein Drittes erzeugen, das Beiden gemeinschaftlich angehört. Der allgemeine Geist und der individuelle stehen sich in diesem Prozess wie Zeichner und Kolorist gegenüber. ---- Die Sprache erscheint als fest und flüssig zugleich."
4. W XI 67²⁰.

S T Y L E.

It is by no means easy to fix Hebbel's ideas on style, and he uses the word "Stil" in his writings in a number of different senses. The clearest account of what he means by "Stil" is found in the 1847 essay, "Ueber den Stil des Dramas", ¹ which Hebbel begins by finding fault with the usual criticisms offered of the style of a drama. Such remarks as: "The dialogue is natural", "The dialogue is clumsy", and so forth, are far too general and sweeping. Any real criticism of the style of a drama should refer to individual scenes, even to individual speeches; for there is room for many different kinds of dialogue in a whole play. ²

Speech is in itself, as Hebbel writes in a short excursus on the philosophy of language, at the same time unchanging and in flux. It belongs equally to the general mind of the nation, of which it is the product, and the individual mind which makes use of it for his particular purpose. The first traces the outlines, as it were, which define its form, and the second gives it individual colouring. ³

The "life of the spirit", continues Hebbel, ⁴ finds expression in language in two forms, corresponding to the two/

1. W XI 69⁵.

2. W XI 69²⁰. "Das Denkvermögen betätigt sich in der Bildung reiner Begriffe und gelangt zur Form im philosophischen System; das Dichtungsvermögen in der unmittelbaren Aufnahme und freien Reproduktion symbolischer Anschauungen und gipfelt im geschlossenen Kunstwerk. --- Der Begriff löst in unendlicher Ausbreitung alles Besondere ins Allgemeine auf, die dichterische Anschauung deckt in ebenso unendlicher Vertiefung das Allgemeine im Besonderen auf."

3. W XI 167¹.

4. W XI 70¹⁶. "Die Dichtung erwächst also aus der Anschauung, sie hat es mit dem Leben zu tun und ist dessen Spitze. Das sprachliche Produkt, das entsteht, wenn ein positiv individueller Geist --- den allgemeinen auf die oben entwickelten Weise durchdringt und befruchtet, wird Stil genannt; es setzt beide Faktoren mit gleicher Notwendigkeit voraus, ist darum Ausdruck zugleich der Bildung, wie der Artung eines Individuum."

two root-forms of intellectual activity, those of the thinker and of the poet. That is to say that one of these two forms predominates in the mind of the thinker or of the poet; the human intelligence operates always as a whole, and the two forms are really inseparable in any individual.¹ Hebbel goes on to describe these forms.² The capacity for thought results in the formation of concepts and culminates in philosophic systems; the capacity for poetry is concerned with the "direct apprehension and unhindered reproduction of symbolic perceptions", and culminates in the work of art. The philosopher, by the process of continual extension, merges the particular in the general; the poet, by penetrating ever deeper into his subject, reveals the general in the particular. (Later, in the review of the Schiller-Körner correspondence,³ Hebbel refers to his essay on "Stil" and claims to find in Schiller's writings similar ideas to his own on the poet's use of language.)

The particular "symbolic perception", directly apprehended and freely reproduced in every work of art, is a perception of life, for this is the theme of all poetry. Hebbel goes on⁴ to define "style" as the outcome in language of the combination of a creative intelligence/

1. W XI 71¹¹. "Das Drama ist die höchste Form der Poesie und der Kunst überhaupt, hat aber nichtsdestoweniger die Aufgabe, das Leben in seiner Unmittelbarkeit zur Anschauung zu bringen und den alles umfassenden Verstand, der ihm im Ganzen zugrunde liegen muss, im Einzelnen hinter anscheinender Willkür zu verstecken; es soll eine Welt sein, keine Uhr. Die Lösung dieser Aufgabe hängt nun zwar zunächst von dem Wechselgeflecht der Charaktere und Situationen ab, von dem Grade, wie diese sich gegenseitig bedingen, und dem Verhältnis, worin sie zum Ideenzentrum stehen, sie findet ihre vollständige Realisierung aber erst in der Sprache."

2. W XI 65²².

intelligence with the universal, in the way sketched above as typical of the poet. Style thus includes at once the expression of the writer's age and race as well as of his individuality. Drama in particular,¹ the highest form of poetry and indeed of all art, for Hebbel, has the task of giving a direct presentation of life and clothing the underlying reason governing it in an apparently fortuitous series of events. The poet accomplishes this task in the first instance by the creation of characters in particular situations and by relating them to an underlying nucleus of ideas; (that is, by revealing in them the metaphysical significance which Hebbel demands of all serious drama) but the medium in which he works is ultimately the language put into the mouths of individual characters. The handling of language is therefore for Hebbel a particularly important element in the work of the poet; in drama especially it is the most important.² The idea underlying the work, and even the characters, have a tendency to remain too abstract (partly owing to their symbolic nature); it is only in language that the concrete is "at once revealed to the esthetic sense". It is only through and in language that the long preparatory activity of the poetic spirit ripens into a definite poetic creation. Hebbel defines "Stil" as the/

p. 105
here

1. T II 2897. "Was Stil in der Kunst sei, das begreifen die Leute am allerwenigsten. So in der Tragödie, dass die Idee im ersten Akt als zuckendes Licht, im zweiten als Stern, der mit Nebeln kämpft, im dritten als dämmernder Mond, im vierten als strahlende Sonne, die keiner mehr verleugnen kann, und im fünften als verzehrender und zerstörender Komet hervortreten muss - das werden sie nie fassen."
2. W XI 71²⁴. "Darstellung oder Relation: die Sache selbst oder ein Bericht über die Sache."
3. W XI 71²⁶ f.
4. W XI 72¹³.

the gradual unfolding of the idea in a drama,¹ and the idea and the relation of the characters to it are only realised when they are shaped in words.

Hebbel next² contrasts in drama the styles of Narration and of Presentation; one gives us the report of an event, the other the event itself. The former Hebbel describes as being concerned with what is complete and finished in itself, dealing with stages of development as completed stages, with results rather than causes. The style of Presentation gives the "process of becoming", that is, life, in its whole complexity and in all the phases of its growth; it portrays life in its essential aspect of protean change, thus commanding our belief (in a way that mere narration never does) by being the proof of itself. In other words, art to be convincing must have the apparent complexity of life.³

The language of these two styles differs according to their aim and scope.⁴ Dramatic narration should be concise and unadorned. The style of presentation (that is, of scenes in which things are happening before our eyes) is quite different; here at every step all sorts of perceptions and relations suggest themselves (to the poet who writes the words and/

1. W XI 72²⁵. "--- die Lebensäußerungen kreuzen sich und heben sich auf."
2. W XI 72³². "--- Vergegenwärtigung der Zustände in ihrer organischen Gesamtheit."
3. W XI 73¹.
4. T II 1965.
5. W XI 72⁴.
6. T III 4175.
7. T III 4791.
 - 1^{ste}. Stufe künstlerischer Wirkung: es kann so sein!
 - 2^{te}. " " " es ist!
 - 3^{te}. " " " es muss so sein!"

and to the audience which hears them); the line of thought is continually broken, the "characters express conflicting and self-contradictory purposes",¹ the word itself becomes independent and reveals its hidden significance. Here the object is not minute description or analysis but "the presentation of situations in their organic unity",² not merely of the results of these situations. For this reason, irregularity in the structure of lines, complexity in the construction of the sentences, and incongruity in the images used characterise the style of presentation.³ Hebbel here refers to Shakespearian dialogue as a model, and the passage is important for the light it throws on his own work. "To represent is to recreate", Hebbel wrote on another occasion,⁴ "to seize and fashion life". The style of Presentation, bringing before us the whole process of becoming, does this; and by giving us not merely results but also the causes which lead up to them, it bears the stamp of necessity.⁵ Or again, as Hebbel writes, "the whole secret of dramatic style is to portray necessity in the form of chance".⁶ The highest poetic effect is attained when the feeling of inevitability has been aroused.⁷

Representation of life in art being not merely a rendering/

1. T I 1284. "Das Darstellen wirkt im Beschränkten ein Unbeschränktes."
2. W XI 6²⁷.
3. T II 2172.
4. T II 2756. "Das ganze/ist ein verunglückter Versuch des Individuums, Form zu erlangen; man springt beständig von der einen in die andere hinein und findet jede zu eng oder zu weit, bis man des Experimentierens müde wird und sich von der letzten ersticken oder auseinander reissen lässt.
5. T II 2318.
6. W XI 6²¹f. "Der Inhalt des Lebens ist unerschöpflich, und das Medium der Kunst ist begrenzt. Das Leben kennt keinen Abschluss, der Faden, an dem es die Erscheinungen abspinnt, zieht sich ins Unendliche hin, die Kunst dagegen muss abschliessen, sie muss den Faden, so gut es geht, zum Kreis zusammenknüpfen, und dies ist der Punkt, den Goethe allein im Auge haben konnte, als er aussprach, dass alle Formen etwas Unwahres mit sich führen. Dies Unwahre lässt sich freilich schon im Leben aufzeigen, denn auch dieses bietet keine einzige Form dar, worin alle seine Elemente gleichmässig aufgehen; --- die beiden Eimer im Brunnen, wovon immer nur einer voll sein kann, sind das bezeichnendste Symbol aller Schöpfung. ---- Die vorzüglichsten Dramen aller Literaturen zeigen uns, dass der Dichter den unsichtbaren Ring, innerhalb dessen das von ihm aufgestellte Lebensbild sich bewegt, oft nur dadurch zusammenfügen konnte, dass er einem oder einigen der Hauptcharaktere ein das Mass des Wirklichen bei weitem überschreitendes Welt- und Selbstbewusstsein verlieh. ---- Was sich bei den grössten Dramatikern als durchgehender Zug in ganzen Charakteren findet, das wird auch oft im Einzelnen, in den kulminierenden Momenten, angetroffen, indem das Wort neben der Tat einhergeht, oder ihr wohl gar voraneilt, und dies ist es, --- was die bewusste Darstellung in der Kunst von der unbewussten im Leben unterscheidet, dass jene scharfe und ganze Umrisse bringen muss, während diese --- sich am Ach und O, an einer Miene, einer Bewegung, genügen lassen mag."

rendering but a re-creation, the poet treats his theme by taking a part of life and regarding it as an organic whole, while remaining conscious of the fact that he is limiting himself to the part.¹ In this proceeding lies what Hebbel calls the "falsity" of art.² (Earlier, in 1840,³ he had even called the various individual forms of life "false", because they each contain only a part and not the whole of human will.) Life itself is necessarily formless in that it does not confine itself to one form,⁴ and art in giving it form "falsifies" it. To represent the intangible, the abstract, the poet must make use of the visible, limited finite, the concrete.⁵ The representation in art⁶ is "conscious", in contrast to that of life, which is "unconscious"; and the great difference between them is that the former must display clearly defined and fully traced contours. The content of life, and consequently of art, is infinite; the medium of art is limited. Art must close the ring as best it can, and represent as a whole what is part of an unending sequence. Even life, insists Hebbel once more, in its inevitable specialisation, lacks "truth". This fact of the necessity for clear outlines in art influences the place of speech in drama. The word must accompany the action or even precede it; art must/

1. Br. I 286²⁶.

2. Br. I 170⁵. "Wenn meine Jungfrau von Orleans zustande kommt, so werde ich sie lieber auf den Scheiterhaufen, als auf die Bühne bringen. --- Schillers Jungfrau ist eine echte Theater-Jungfrau."

3. T II 2122.

must underline, through speech, what life expresses with a gesture or through atmosphere. And in practice, Hebbel's characters do express themselves to a very great extent through speech and very little through gesture or in the general atmosphere of the work.

Hebbel's views on the language of drama are naturally connected with his attitude towards the relation of the drama to the theatre, and this underwent some change during the first years of his literary activity. It is not unlikely that his earlier views, very vividly expressed, were influenced by the attitude adopted by the public and particularly by the theatre-directors in Hamburg and Berlin to the young dramatist. Later, however, when he received no more sympathy and understanding from Laube at the Court Theatre in Vienna than formerly from his colleagues in North Germany, Hebbel still adhered in the main to his more recently formed opinion. The young Hebbel has a great contempt for the judgment of the public and announced in 1838 that his plays, which he had still to write, would not be written for the stage, would not indeed be able to be acted.¹ He calls Schiller's *Jungfrau von Orleans* a "regular theatre-figure",² and foresees that "*Genoveva*" is no drama for the theatre.³ (He acknowledges, however, /

1. T I 1862. "Die Poesie will ich wohl vertreten, aber das Theatralische macht mir grosse Sorgen."
2. T III 5220.
3. T II 2444. "Deutlicher, immer deutlicher wird es mir, dass ich ganz vom Theater absehen muss."
4. T II 3003³⁸.
& s. T II 2867⁵¹. "Kunstwerke, die aufgeführt werden können, sollen auch aufgeführt werden."
& later T IV 5685.
5. W XI 11³¹.
6. W I 461. Vorwort zur "Julia".
7. W XI 15¹¹. "Die Trennung zwischen Drama und Theater ist unnatürlich, sie sollte nicht sein. Aber sie ist, und sie wird schwerlich wieder beseitigt, denn die Ideal-Bühne ist nur einmal, bei den Griechen, wo das Drama aus der Religion hervorging und in Stoff und Form heilig und geweiht war, verkörpert gewesen; das moderne Theater dagegen --- war von jeher Unterhaltungsmittel, Zeitvertreib."
& s. W X 367²⁷.
8. T II 2867⁵⁴.
9. W XI 17¹². "Der Seidenwurm hört nicht zu spinnen auf, weil wollene Zeuge Mode werden und der dramatische Geist nicht zu gestalten, weil man ihm das Theater verschliesst."
& s. W XII 266⁷.
& T IV 5993.
& T III 3562. "Dichter, Dichter, nur halte Dich in den Grenzen der Bühne!
Wachse, Knabe, nur nie über den Maststab hinaus!"

however, that in the case of "Judith" the theatrical aspect of the work gave him trouble,¹ which shows that he had given this some thought. And it must be remembered that in 1854 he was gratified by the successful representation in Vienna of his "Genoveva"².) After the failure of his friends to appreciate "Genoveva" on its first appearance in 1843, Hebbel notes³ - evidently with some reluctance - that he must renounce all hope of exerting influence through the theatre. And in the following year, when suffering from the disappointment caused by his failure to find a director to produce "Maria Magdalena", Hebbel writes⁴ that the theatre can, if need be, develop independently of the stage. Hebbel had been blamed by Heiberg for altering "Judith" to suit the directors,⁵ and he has no intention of making concessions with other plays.⁶ The separation between the dramatic and the theatrical, Hebbel notes in 1844,⁷ is unnatural; but it exists, and it is too late to bridge the gap between the theatre and life in days when the theatre is merely an amusement.

Hebbel resents the power of the actor to alter the intensely personal interpretation which he puts upon his plays.⁸ He insists that the poet is independent of the stage and of whether he writes for it or not.⁹ He is primarily/

1. W II 393¹⁸.

2. T IV 3478. "Eine gute Theater-Vorstellung macht auf mich ungefähr den Eindruck, als ob ich lebhaft träume. Ich weiss: es ist nicht wahr! aber ich kann mich nicht losreissen."

& s. T IV 5477.

3. W XI 52¹⁵. "Eine Dichtung, die sich für eine dramatische gibt, muss darstellbar sein, jedoch nur deshalb; weil, was der Künstler nicht darzustellen vermag, von dem Dichter selbst nicht dargestellt wurde, sondern Embryo und Gedanken-Schemen blieb. Darstellbar ist nun nur das Handeln, nicht das Denken und Empfinden; Gedanken und Empfindungen gehören also nicht an sich, sondern immer nur so weit, als sie sich unmittelbar zur Handlung umbilden, ins Drama hinein.

& s. T II 2014. "Das Leben in reiner, ungemischter Gestalt kann kein Vorwurf künstlerischer Darstellung sein, denn es ist nicht zu packen; nur das in Bewegung gesetzte."

& s. T IV 2782 & W X 397¹.

4. W XI 54¹⁹.

& s. W XII 235³².

primarily expressing ideas in a certain form, not writing for the delectation and amusement of those rather bored people who attend theatrical performances. Hebbel's indifference strikes one as a little forced, however, and he admits in 1850¹ that the opinions he expressed in 1844 were the result of a "forced resignation". Later Hebbel fully appreciated the influence of a good theatrical performance,² and in the "Preface to Maria Magdalena" he sums up his maturer view by saying³ that a dramatic work must be able to be presented on the stage, because it is concerned with life in the form of action, that is, with the outward expression of ideas, not with thoughts or feelings alone. Shakespeare and Calderon were not merely great dramatic poets but true writers for the theatre. The test for drama is not whether it is but whether it can be performed.⁴

The characters in drama express themselves mainly through speech. (It has been noted how speech was in Hebbel's view a particularly important element in drama.) As one might expect from Hebbel's conception of character, the speech, to satisfy Hebbel's requirements, must be at once individual and general, must reflect the poet and his age, while revealing both through the character to be represented. Hebbel is a very severe critic/

1. T I 513 & W XI 64³⁰ & T II 2178 & T II 2407.

2. W VI 323f & s. T III 3960.

3. W XI 73¹. "Rauigkeit des Versbaus, Verwickelung und Verworrenheit des Periodengefüges, Widerspruch der Bilder, erheben sich zu wirksamen und unumgänglichen Darstellungsmitteln, wenn sie auch dem oberflächlichen Blicke, der nicht erkennt, dass auch das Ringen um Ausdruck Ausdruck ist, als Ungeschicklichkeiten und Schwerfälligkeiten erscheinen mögen."

& s. T IV 5994 & T III 3337.

4. W XI 62³²f.

5. W XI 63¹³.

critic of mere "fine diction" as being unsuitable to express character and unable to take the place of characterisation.¹ The character expresses himself, Hebbel insists, through the manner of his speech;² his inarticulateness, for example, his pauses and struggle for words are part of the expression of his thought and character. The nature of the speech in which the character expresses himself is thus in itself a means for the presentation of character; "the struggle for expression is in itself expression".³ In particular, Hebbel criticises the speech placed by most writers of domestic tragedy in the mouths of their characters as being totally unsuited to these characters.⁴ Either they make use of high-flown expressions utterly out of keeping with their social status, or they limit themselves to meaningless ejaculations. Writers of domestic tragedy must realise that the workman acquires his vocabulary and learns to use it in his workshop, the peasant behind the plough, etc.: their speech mirrors their occupations and their surroundings.⁵ Hebbel has given an example of what he wanted in the speech of Meister Anton in "Maria Magdalena".

In this whole question of the importance and proper use of speech in drama one distinguishes two lines of thought/

1. W XI 71²¹.

2. T IV 5996. "Es gehört mit zu den Illusions-Mitteln der Kunst, das Gebild der schöpferischen Phantasie in einen gewissen Einklang mit der Wirklichkeit zu setzten. Immer aber bleibt es Mittel, wird nie Zweck, ausser auf der alleruntersten Stufe, wo z. B. Ifflandsche Schauspiele und Photographieen entstehen, deren ganzes Verdienst in dem Grad der Aehnlichkeit liegt, und man darf es unter Umständen ruhig mit einem ganz anderen, ja mit dem entgegengesetzten, vertauschen, wenn man dadurch rascher zum Ziel gelangt."

thought in Hebbel's theory. Hebbel believes that the vocabulary and mode of expression of the character reveal his nature and that therefore any inarticulateness or difficulty of expression may mirror certain moods or feelings. It is not necessary for the character to express everything in words; the fact or the manner of breaking off a sentence or train of thought, or a pause, may express more clearly than words what is going on in the mind of the character. On the other hand, Hebbel states that everything which does not find its expression in speech belongs to the work of preparation¹ and that speech is the all-important element of drama. Drama, like all art, is (in contrast to life) a conscious presentation of its material and must give clear outlines where life can convey its meaning more vaguely by an interjection or a gesture. Here Hebbel is at variance with Iffland and the "Naturalists" who wished to bring life untransposed on to the stage.²

In practice, Hebbel makes very great use of conscious expression through the words uttered by his characters. They do interrupt themselves and utter half-thoughts, as for instance Mariamne in the scenes of her accusation, but for the most part Hebbel's characters are strikingly "articulate". They analyse themselves in their/

1. T IV 5328. "Realismus und Idealismus, wie vereinigen sie sich im Drama? Dadurch, dass man jenen steigert und diesen schwächt. Ein Charakter z. B. handle und spreche nie über seine Welt hinaus, aber für das, was in seiner Welt möglich ist, finde er die reinste Form und den edelsten Ausdruck, selbst der Bauer."

2. T I 1503 & s. T II 2405.

their speeches, without however understanding either each other or themselves truly. (The scenes between Herod and Mariamne suggest themselves as an example.) Hebbel's attitude to the whole question seems to be summed up in a diary entry for 1854¹: "How do Realism and Idealism merge in drama? The former is to be stressed and the latter weakened. For example, a character should never act or speak in such a way as to leave his own sphere, but for what is possible within his range he should find (even the peasant) the purest form and the noblest expression." This passage shows how far Hebbel was, in intention, from the Naturalists and how much nearer to Goethe. There is still the ideal of "edle Einfalt" here.

Of the Unities Hebbel says little. "A building justifies its existence only by what it houses," he writes.² Rules and precepts are only material for the poet's use, and if he is a genius he will benefit by them without ever having learnt them. With regard to Aristotle, Hebbel implies that the "mistaken" conception of the Unities has not done so much harm as the definition of the aim of tragedy as the arousing of pity and fear. Hebbel considers the definition correct in so far as it describes not the aim but the inevitable result/

1. T III 3525. "Aristoteles hat auf die dramatische Kunst vielleicht noch schlimmer eingewirkt durch seine Bestimmung, dass die Tragödie Furcht und Mitleid erwecken solle, als durch seine Einheiten. Und doch ist jene richtig, wenn man nur eine Beschreibung des Gemütszustands, den die Tragödie hervorbringen muss, falls sie echt ist, nicht für die Definition ihres Zweckes hält."
2. W XI 186²³.
3. T II 2897.
4. T III 3597.
5. T III 4276.
& s. W VI 353 & W VII 344.
6. W XII 71¹¹. "--- ein schöpferischer Akt der Phantasie."

result of tragedy on the temperament of the spectator.¹ Hebbel calls Aristotle in a later passage² the greatest art-critic of all time, and says that his "rules", though not hard and fast ones, are better revered than neglected. In practice, Hebbel himself has a preference for "analytic" construction in his plays, and he condemns the over-emphasis on detail resulting from the imitation of a mistaken conception of Shakespearean drama. He implies by his example and the reference to style in art³ that he is in favour of the five-act tragedy. He warns against too frequent changes of scene as a disturbing factor in a work which should be taken as a whole.⁴

As to the use of verse in tragedy, Hebbel has little to say, but on one occasion he criticises Goethe's statement that everything poetic should be rhythmic.⁵ There are subjects, Hebbel writes, which as a whole are poetical, in detail however are so near the realm of prose that they must be expressed in prose, for example the subjects treated in domestic tragedies. The difference between prose and poetry, he says again, does not lie merely in the absence or presence of rhyme. In poetry, an additional creative act of the imagination is necessary, individualising the general thought and generalising the particular feeling.⁶

CONCLUSION.

Without attempting to treat in detail the subject of the extent of Hebbel's debt to his age, one may note, in summing up Hebbel's contribution to literary and esthetic criticism and his place in its history, that he shared many ideas with his contemporaries and that his theory belongs quite definitely in character and conception to the period of Romantic Idealism in Germany. This fact has already been touched upon here and it is essential for an understanding and appreciation of Hebbel's theory.

The period of Rationalism in dramatic theory had come to an end with the rise of individualism. Gottsched, Lessing and also Schiller in his earlier writings, had seen in art the servant of every-day morality. The tragic hero was not important as a personality but as an "example" to serve as an incentive to laudable actions or a warning against crime. The action, borne by the hero, definitely "pointed a moral". The young writers of the "Sturm und Drang" period had then shifted the balance to the individual. They admired in particular Shakespeare as the creator of powerful characters, powerful both for "good" and for "evil"/

"evil" and inspiring admiration because of the strength of their will, quite apart from its direction. (The whole art of poetic creation, too, was the expression of personality and had its importance as such alone, not in any result which the product might have on the mind of the spectator or the reader.) Within the drama itself, the strength of the hero's will was measured by his resistance to obstacles. The "Sturm und Drang" writers were giving expression in art to what they experienced in life - the opposition between the individual and the community and the force of tradition. The young Goethe saw the source of power in Shakespeare's historical drama in his ability to give expression to the eternal conflict between the individual will and the "necessary course of events". Here are ideas which have been found in Hebbel. We know that he was familiar, as the "Sturm und Drang" had been, with the works of Jakob Böhme, in which the dualism is traced back to the Deity itself and to the art of the creation of the universe. The philosophers of the period and their successors expanded these ideas and generalised them. Schelling, with whose ideas Hebbel was familiar, insisted upon the inevitable conflict between the personal and the universal will; and to the personal/

personal will the individual owes its existence. He went on to say that art alone can reconcile this dualism which he clearly visualised as a conflict between the individual and the general, and which he, like Hebbel, saw exemplified in the course of history. In his "First Sketch of a System of Natural Philosophy" Schelling stated that the individual must appear to be only the means by which nature attains its end, the species: the individual must succumb and the species survive, if it is true that individual products in nature must be looked upon as unsuccessful attempts at a representation of the Absolute. Solger, and after him Hebbel, took up these ideas and applied them particularly to the theory of the tragic and of tragedy.

Here, then, we have already the root idea of Hebbel's Theory, the conception of the dualism (inherent in all things) between the individual and the general, Hebbel's "Pantragism". Drama, in Hebbel's view, portrays the process of life, not (as the "Sturm und Drang" had thought) of individual life alone, but of life in its relation to the whole. And this relation is, as has been seen, a tragic one. Looked at from the individual's point of view, all "drama" is "tragedy". And indeed, Hebbel's views on comedy are by no means clear/

clear and give the impression that he saw in it either a grim satire or an escape from the problems of tragedy; for the "comic" he had no feeling. Drama expresses Hebbel's view of life, which is essentially a "tragic" one, involving as it does a conflict between the individual and the general, and the necessary destruction of the former. (The connection between Hebbel's conception of the individual and that of his contemporaries has been pointed out, as well as the influence of events in his life.) The metaphysical idea illustrated in tragedy is then the idea of the necessary conflict following upon the fact of individuation, which Hebbel considers to involve an incapacity to keep within bounds.

There is therefore no question in tragedy of "guilt" in the ordinary sense of the word. However the individual acts, his action entails - from the point of view of the general - "tragic guilt". Hebbel does not judge heroes by the code of everyday morality. But this is not because, like Schiller, he wishes to extol the power of the will, but to bring home the inevitability of the conflict, given individuation, no matter what the aim of the individual may be. The old code of morality is obsolete. For Hebbel true morality/

morality is identical with necessity, with the inevitable course of events. Fate works itself out through character.

Fate is, however, for Hebbel, not merely blind chance but the progress of what he calls in Hegelian language and thought, the "Idea". The Idea can progress only by means of the successive crises in its history precipitated by the resistance of particularly strong individuals, to the then existing state of affairs. It is thus, in Hegel's sense, the privilege of strong characters to be "guilty" and through their guilt the "Idea" is able to enter upon a new phase in its development. In all history Hebbel thus finds examples of a crisis in events being brought on by the rebellion of a strong character against an existing order of affairs justifiable in itself, no longer strong enough to hold its own, but yet strong enough to bring about the destruction of the force which had disturbed it. This, in Hebbel's view, is true "historical" drama, and in this sense all drama is historical and treats some historical theme, while being in itself a historical document.

The tragic character, then, is at once individual and a representative of his age, for in drama of this metaphysical/

metaphysical type the hero is humanity in individual representation. He is depicted by means of the portrayal of his reactions to his surroundings and is thus seen to be constantly changing. And it is through the hero that the reconciliation in drama is brought about, by the realisation of the necessity of suffering for the progress of the Idea, whether or not the necessity is grasped by the hero himself. Hebbel naturally scorns the thought of any "individual" reconciliation within the scope of the drama.

These would seem to be Hebbel's central notions about tragedy, but it is often by no means easy to formulate Hebbel's opinion on particular points, for several reasons. The sources from which one may take one's evidence are scattered over nearly thirty years, during which Hebbel came under many influences and had many experiences. The diaries, perhaps the most illuminating source for a study of Hebbel's thought, contain, as Hebbel himself expresses it, ideas and thoughts which he has jotted down as material for more detailed and systematic treatment, not fixed and formulated views. Hence contradictions are frequently to be found, not always attributable to a change in opinion as the result of a new influence, but merely expressing/

expressing Hebbel's own doubts and lack of clearness. The letters, again, are to some extent modified in content and treatment according to the recipient, although this is less the case with Hebbel than with many writers; in the earlier years especially there is little modification in his style. Hebbel's prefaces, criticisms and reviews contain his most categorical statements on the nature of tragedy, but these are often extremely difficult to interpret. Hebbel made use of the philosophical terminology of his age (in particular of Hegel) for his own purposes and in his own sense, and he often uses the same word in several different senses. Added to this, his style is often so involved, his period so long and so intricate, his ideas succeeding and running into each other with such bewildering swiftness, that the precise meaning is by no means easy to find. It would be an error, however, to suppose that this "Hegel-style" implies with Hebbel in every instance confusion of thought. Hebbel states of himself that his ideas are often clearer in his own head than when given expression, and that particularly expression in writing presents greater difficulties to him than verbal exposition. And when one agrees with Hebbel that the manner/

manner of utterance is in itself an expression of character, his writings reveal attractive qualities, great energy and originality of thought, and absolute sincerity.

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